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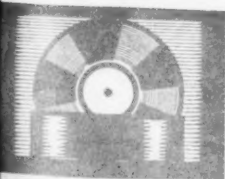
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December, 1940

Editorial Notes

RETURNS from our questionnaire, mailed out to readers last spring and summer, have been most gratifying. Almost fifty percent of our readers to date have filled in the card and sent it back to us. Some of the results of this questionnaire will no doubt interest our readers, so we present them here. Not all of those who replied answered every question; consequently in most cases the total will not add up to 100%. Let us take up the questions in the order given:

1. Do you read The American Music Lover every month?

Yes — 97.4%. No — 2.6%.

2. Do you keep your copies of the magazines?

Yes — 94.7% No — 5.3%.

3. Do you rely on our reviews to assist you in your purchases?

Yes — 95.4%. No — 1.4%. In part — 3.2%.

4. What make of machine do you own? Over 45% of the readers who answered this question own an RCA; 6.4% of them own Magnavox machines; 9% Capeharts; 4% Scotts; 4% Philcos; 5% Strombergs; 3% Ansleys; and 11% have custom-built outfits. Only 4% use players through radios. Other sets were named, but these were all used by less than 1% of those who replied.

5. Does your machine have an automatic changer? Yes—35.3% No—60%.

6. Do you use regular or automatic sets? The majority used the regular sets. Only 16% said they used automatic, and 6% said they bought both.

7. Do you buy both classical and popular records? Yes — 47%. No — 53%.

8. If so what proportion? 36.5% buy 98% classical; 7% buy 75% classical; and 3.5% buy 50% classical.

9. Are you interested in replacing older recordings with modern ones if the latter are superior in performance and recording? Yes — 75%. No — 8.3%. Sometimes — 1.6%.

(Continued on page 114)

Sibelius At Seventy-five

Peter Hugh Reed

JAN SIBELIUS, whom Finland calls the standard-bearer of Finnish music and more affectionately the "Field Marshall of all Finnish artists", attains his seventy-fifth birthday on December 8. In this country, the event will be celebrated throughout the nation in the form of a National Sibelius Festival sponsored by For Finland, Inc. during the week beginning December 7. As long ago as 1897 Finland realized that it possessed in Sibelius a musical genius, and in that year the Finnish State provided the composer with a subsidy so that he could retire and devote himself entirely to a creative career. The wisdom and foresight of the Finnish State has been upheld and proved by the work that Sibelius has accomplished in the past forty-three years.

Finland has publicized Sibelius and his music beyond its own borders before this; as early as 1930 arrangements were made by the Finnish Government to underwrite the recording of the composer's first two symphonies (the early Kajanus recordings for Columbia). Subsequently the formation of the Sibelius Society was accomplished and pushed forward with Finland's aid, but whether this aid was in part financial I cannot say. One would suspect that financial aid from Finland was no longer needed after the issuance of those early recordings, for the public reception of them in England and this country soon established Sibelius as a possible best seller on records. There can be no question that the various Sibelius sets that have been released since then have had a large and interested public. Sibelius, as far as record buyers in England and America are concerned, can be termed a popular composer.

In view of this fact, it seems strange that the domestic record companies should not have arranged at this time for the release of up-to-date recordings of several

of the symphonies that are badly in need of re-recording. True, Columbia presents a new recording of the *Second Symphony*, by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Barbirolli, but this was decidedly not one of the symphonies that needed re-recording. Either the *Third* or the *Seventh* would have been more welcome and appropriate.

Victor, however, in recognition of the composer's seventy-fifth birthday this month, issues two orchestral recordings, *Belsbazaar's Feast* and the *Romance in C major*, and also a record containing two songs sung by Jussi Björling, who is highly regarded in Scandinavia as an interpreter of Sibelius' songs. I am given to understand that Björling has also recorded two other songs. Sibelius is still reluctant to talk about himself or his work; in fact, he is seemingly unwilling to cooperate with For Finland, Inc. in its sponsoring of this celebration for his seventy-fifth birthday. He has, to quote the sponsors, achieved throughout his life the most astounding success in shunning publicity and in maintaining a strict silence with regard to the more personal aspects of his life. It is quite apparent that publicity for the sake of publicity was not one of the things he demanded of life.

He seems to be entirely satisfied to realize simply that his music is being played. When it was suggested recently that a fund be raised to erect a statue of him, he vetoed it, saying that such money could be used more advantageously elsewhere at this time and that all he desired was to know that his music was being performed. This has apparently been his attitude always, and it probably accounts, to my way of thinking, for his not being critical of those who perform his music. It has been said by his disparagers that he would endorse any conductor who played his symphonies. However, since such barbs usu-

Sibelius posing for Väinö Aaltonen, famous Finnish sculptor. Behind Sibelius is the statue "Finland's Future" which is in the Session Chamber of the Finnish Parliament Building.



ally emanate from those who would seem to distrust the simpler motives of an artist, they need not be heeded.

Despite the fact that Sibelius dislikes publicity and declines to talk about himself, he is one of the most gracious of hosts and an affable and courteous person. It is said that he will see by appointment well-wishers and admirers from afar. Generally he invites them to come for afternoon coffee, which the Finnish prefer to tea. If he likes his visitor he usually takes him into the rose garden which Mme. Sibelius tends and of which he is very proud.

Sibelius lives in the white birch forests of Jarvenpää, about an hour's journey from Helsinki. His home, built in 1904, is a simple, white clapboard house which is called "Villa Ainola", after Sibelius, whose given name is Aino. He likes to wander through the woods about his home, and he has a favorite bench hidden among the trees. He also has a special balcony, which his friends call his ivory tower, from which he can command a view of the calm of Lake Tuusulan Jarvi. In these two spots much of his composition is accomplished. Rarely does he use his piano for composition; and today he seldom plays his violin, from which at one time he was almost inseparable even in his long walks through the woods and countryside. There is a stone in Kalalahti which is called his favorite concert platform, for it was here, where he could command a rare view across the country, that he used to give endless concerts for the birds. Formerly, he would also stand in the bow of his boat as he sailed on Lake

Lovisa and improvise on his violin. One can conjecture about which of his many compositions were created in this manner. Perhaps if the composer were not so reluctant to talk about himself and his work, there would be many stories to be told of the inspiration that he has gained from nature.

Sibelius has five daughters, to whom he refers as his five symphonies. When they were younger they were given a play-house apart from the Villa Ainola, where they had to spend more than the usual time for play so that there would be absolute quiet when their father was composing in his enormously comfortable living room, which has always been the center of his life when he was not out of doors.

Sibelius is accredited with being a man of great humor and wit. Yet he chose to be a recluse, in order that he might work. One would not call him, however, an intellectual solitary like Delius, for he did not shun the company of mankind in general or contact with the outer world. He has spent much time in cafés in Helsinki, and is said to be a most convivial and affable companion, one not above imbibing freely upon occasion. He is an inveterate smoker, and it is not often that his powerful fingers are not seen about a cigar.

Today, it is said, Sibelius seldom smiles. But this is not surprising. For in the twilight of his life he sees nothing but unrest about him; and in the past year he has had the sanctity of his wooded haven invaded. During the war with Russia last winter, when air raiders flew

over his home, it is told that he refused to enter an air-raid shelter. Instead, he went out into the cold and fired an old hunting rifle at the Russians. A great reader of history as a young man, he has in recent years replaced his early history books with others of astronomy. At 75 the composer remains indoors most of the time. His greatest joy today is his grandchildren, who use the play-house which he originally built for their mothers. It is reported that at this moment he is deeply immersed in writing his *Eighth Symphony*, but since this rumor has been current for many years one does not feel fully justified in accepting it as a fact. It may well be that the *Eighth Symphony* will never be completed, or again that it will prove to be in time, like Elgar's *Third*, an unfinished work — a thing of voluminous sketches which no man but the composer could ever possibly put together.

A Popular Composer

No contemporary composer would seem to rank more highly than Sibelius in public esteem. When a poll of the radio audiences of the New York Philharmonic Society was taken a few years back, Sibelius was voted the most loved of any living composer. Through no effort of his own, he has been the center of a cult. His adherents are as completely laudatory about his music as his detractors are opposed to it. The archbishop of the Sibelius cult is unquestionably the English writer, Cecil Gray, who contends that Sibelius is the greatest symphony composer since Beethoven. Gray is a most persuasive and compelling writer, and his book on Sibelius (Oxford University Press) as well as his brochure on the Symphonies is highly interesting even if one does not wholly agree with him. Gray has been a keen student of Sibelius' music, and therefore there is a great deal that he has to say which deserves to be weighed and considered. Gray, perhaps as much as anyone, has incited a growing disparagement of Sibelius' music among a group who would have you believe he is no symphonist at all. Not a few of the contemporary American composers, such as Roy Harris and Virgil Thomson, have made known their disagreement with Gray. The general trend of criticism against the composer might be summed

up in the comments of our friend Paul Rosenfeld, who recently said: "Sibelius' ideas do not flower. They are merely germs of ideas. They are abortive. He does not display an idea in all its aspects; there is no power of expansion and development in his symphonies, even though he is a skillful and structural orchestrator, and his sense of mood and coloring are good. An exception to this rule may possibly be the *Fourth Symphony*. In such works as *En Saga* and *The Swan of Tuonela* where the symphonic technique is not essential, his great talent seems to me to reach his happiest expression. But in his symphonies he does not display the power requisite to the form."

This is hardly the place for an academic discussion of form. By and large Sibelius' form grows out of these "germs of ideas," and there are too many scholarly musicians who regard their outgrowth as fully flowering to set one camp above another. Let us examine one scholar's attitude toward Sibelius. So dispassionate a writer as Hugo Leichtentritt, for example, in his book *Music, History and Ideas* (Harvard University Press), says:

A Scholar's Praise

"The craving of the more mature and serious minds of our time for something of intrinsic worth, something durable and substantially sound in contemporary music has been too often disappointed. If one surveys recent music with the aim of discovering not merely interesting experiments and fashionable isms but an accomplished art of monumental aspect, weighty contents, and ethical values, with a philosophy of life as background, if one looks for something comparable to the achievements of Wagner or Brahms, a "great" art that satisfies many demands and appeals alike to the adherents of 19th-century traditions and to the young radicals of our day, one finds it not in the work of Schönberg, Stravinsky, Ravel, or Hindemith, but perhaps in Jean Sibelius, whose symphonic output within the last fifteen years has shown its creator capable of a unique spiritual elevation."

This writer says further that Sibelius' art is "of intrinsic worth and substance, instead of virtuoso showmanship, brilliant technical exhibitionism, and revolutionary

Sibelius and his wife in their living room.

experimentation. Here is music thoroughly modern in spirit, grown not in a hothouse but from its native soil of Finland with far-reaching firm, and densely knotted roots."

He divides Sibelius' art into three categories: "the national, the European, the cosmic". I am inclined to agree with Dr. Leichtentritt's observations. It is possible that the "germs of ideas" that start the ball rolling for Sibelius' creative impulse could be developed more fully; his manner of creating will always be open to this sort of criticism. For Sibelius' music is autogeneric, that is, it generates from within itself exactly as nature does. There can be no question that Sibelius has drawn much of his inspiration from nature. Even in his earliest symphonies there is a strong bucolic feeling, albeit without the larger import of his later works. His ability to create and sustain a mood, to achieve tonal coloring that is as simple as it is compelling, is among his most striking attainments. Who among the modernists has written more eloquently for the woodwinds or the brasses of the orchestra? Not even Wagner attained the effects of poetic eloquence in the brass choir that Sibelius has; Wagner treated his brasses more heroically, Sibelius often gives them the power of rhetorical mysticism, of conveying more than a single emotional precept. Take *Tapiola*, a work in which the "germs of ideas", or their development, are by no means as extensive as they might be, yet the work, as Gray says, is a consummate masterpiece "which could only be the outcome of a long process of spiritual growth and development". The adjective "spiritual" has become a dangerous word with which to describe any art; it incites no end of critical tirades. Yet there is no word which describes better the supreme distillation of all emotions, the feeling that heart and mind have united in perfect coordination in the realization of expressive sensibilities.

December, 1940



I agree with the late Lawrence Gilman that perhaps the most remarkable of Sibelius' gifts "is his power of revealing a fresh and unsuspected significance in tonal combinations as familiar and accustomed as the morning light — and as mysterious and wonderful. He has always, in varying degree, possessed this power of transforming musical substance into something new and strange". His conception of the development of musical substance would seem to be as much involved with mood and color as with thematic fruition. But this, in my humble estimation, does not give the right to question the esthetic integrity of his art.

* * *

We are often asked what symphony of Sibelius we would recommend to those unfamiliar with his orchestral music. Some years ago we would have unhesitatingly recommended the *First* or *Second Symphonies*, but not today. The *Fifth Symphony* is our recommendation in the superb performance and recording of Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. True, there is not a sensuous note in the entire work; on the other hand the music is not austere. On the whole melodically simple, the work abounds in rich tonal effects, contrasts of rhythm and mood. In a word, it is wholly characteristic of Sibelius as an individual creative artist. But the subject of Sibelius and the music lover unfamiliar with his works would require an article by itself.

Overtures

▲ The big news this month is for Wagner fans. Flagstad and Melchior recorded with the Philadelphia Orchestra this past month 16 or more record sides. Five sides from the second act from *Parsifal* and the *Marriage Chamber Scene* from *Lobengrin* were among the duets taken. The solos made by Melchior, we are given to understand, include the *Ode to Venus* and the *Rome Journey* from *Tannhäuser*, the *Prayer* from *Rienzi*, and the *Steersman's Song* from *Tristan und Isolde*. We hear that Björling and Thorborg have made duets from *Trovatore* and *Aida*. And there is a rumor that Flagstad and Melchior may record the final scene from *Siegfried*, but this has not been accomplished as yet. It looks very much like a Wagnerian Festival.

The National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D. C., under the direction of Hans Kindler, has recorded 16 sides. These will contain such works as Tschai-kowsky's *Third Symphony*; William Schuman's *American Festival Overture*; Dr. Kindler's arrangement of Frescobaldi's *Toccata*; and the Corelli *Suite*.

It is also rumored that Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra recorded Ravel's *La Valse* recently; and that the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, while on a visit to New York, made a new recording of Brahms' *Third Symphony*.

The news from Europe for all Beecham enthusiasts is the fact that he has made a recording of Franck's *Symphony*. The following recordings have been released this past month in England:

BEETHOVEN: *Leonore No. 2 Overture*; Toscanini and the B.B.C. Sym. Orch. H.M.V. DA1753/54.

CHOPIN: *Mazurka in F sharp mi., Op. 59, No. 3*; and PADEREWSKI: *Mélodie — Chants du Voyageur*; I. J. Paderewski. H.M.V. DB3709.

FRANCK: *Symphony in D minor*; Beecham and the London Phil. Orchestra. Columbia LX904/8.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*; Benno Moiseiwitsch. H.M.V. C3192.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 9*; Louis Kentner. Columbia DX987.

RACHMANINOFF: *First Piano Concerto*; Rachmaninoff and the Phila. Orch., dir. Ormandy.

STRAUSS, J.: *Wine, Women, and Song*; Weingartner and the Paris Conservatory Orch. Columbia LX909.

We are given to understand that the Budapest String Quartet have begun a group of Beethoven recordings for Columbia, that may possibly be extended to include the entire sixteen quartets by the composer. The first recording completed, we are told, is the *C sharp minor Quartet*, *Opus 131*.

Editorial

(Continued from page 109)

10. In buying records what do you consider primarily — technical superiority, or perfection of performance? Technical superiority — 13%. Perfection of performance — 60%. Both — 24%.

11. Are you interested in old records primarily of historical importance? Yes — 31%. No — 60%.

12. Would you like to have more popular records reviewed each month? Yes — 10%. No. — 85%. Indifferent — less than 1%.

13. How large a record library do you have (about how many records)? 28% said they had around 250 records. 37% from 500 to 600 records. 10% had anywhere from 700 to 1000 records. 7.6% had from 1100 to 1500. 5.5% had from 1600 to 2000. 2.3% had 2500 records; 1% had 3000 and 2.8% 4000 to 5000. Several readers had collections of 7000, 8000, 10,000 and 15,000 records.

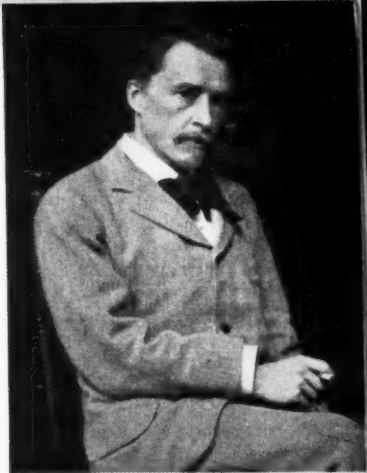
14. Are you a buyer of books on music? Yes — 65%. No — 10%.

At a near date in the future we intend to send out another questionnaire on musical preferences of readers, and we hope that as many, if not more, will be kind enough to fill it in and return it.

We would like to thank the many readers who added favorable comments on our work when returning the card.

Hugo Wolf On Records

Philip L. Miller



"THE death took place, on February 22, in a lunatic asylum in Vienna, of Hugo Wolf, a prolific composer of songs, several choral works, a string quartet, a three-act opera, and other compositions. He wrote songs wholesale, and Hugo Wolf clubs were formed in order to popularize his works. Wolf was born on March 13, 1860, at Windischgratz, Styria; he had, therefore, nearly completed the forty-third year of his life." This brief obituary, which appeared in the *Musical Times* for April 1, 1903, may be taken as fairly typical of the reaction, where there was any reaction at all, to the news of the passing of the greatest song composer the world has known. It would probably amaze the writer of this none too fulsome appreciation to know that in 1931 Hugo Wolf clubs were still being formed, and that one of them was destined to prove historic, not only as the strongest propaganda for Wolf, but as the beginning of a new movement among the manufacturers of phonograph records. For the Hugo Wolf Society was the first of the great limited edition clubs which have made possible the recording of so much little-known music. The Wolf Society has certainly not been among the most popular of these clubs — in fact I understand that the long waits between volumes have been the result of a lack of public support no less than of the immense difficulties in "casting" the Wolf songs — but the six volumes which have so far appeared are among the indispensable possessions of all lieder enthusiasts. It seems now that a far more fundamental cause

will keep a seventh volume for some time in the future; therefore it may not be amiss at this time not only to discuss the splendid work which the society has done, but to compare it with the various independent Wolf recordings which have been on the open market.

The fact that so much of Wolf's output exists on records is the best possible proof that the world is at last catching up with this composer. And the further fact that not only such popular artists as Lotte Lehmann, but comparatively unknown singers as well, occasionally have the courage to present entire Wolf programs in New York's Town Hall is certainly equally significant. The public has only to hear certain of the less involved songs in order to realize the fallacy of the old charge that Wolf lacked a gift of melody. The almost Franzian *Morgentau* and *Wiegenlied* (*Im Sommer*), and others to be found in every book of Wolf lieder, remain to prove the falsity of this accusation. Another misunderstanding which familiarity alone can end is the charge of sameness. The lines between the various sets of Wolf's songs are clear enough to anyone who has come to know them, and the shifting moods within each collection — especially the *Mörke Lieder* — are truly kaleidoscopic. It would be difficult to analyze these differences technically: it is safest, and truest, to seek the explanation in his uncanny sensitivity to the changes in the poetry he set.

Of course Hugo Wolf himself must be held responsible in a large measure for the

tardy public acceptance of his songs. Personally he was moody and tactless, although those friends who really understood him found it possible to remain loyal to him. Perhaps the most unfortunate blot on his career as a critic was his enmity toward Brahms, which was certainly begun and perpetuated on the younger composer's side. To be sure Wolf's methods and those of his great rival were practically opposite. Wolf was first and last a song writer. He had learned from Wagner all the lessons that master had to teach, and his approach to the task of writing a song was always through the poem. Brahms, on the other hand, was a universal musician. Song writing for him was only one of his many accomplishments. His style was so saturated with the civilized and polite folk music of his Germany that he reflected German civilization in every one of his works. Wolf returned to the *original* purpose of song — the idea from which the more stylized German folk song had so elaborately evolved. That is, he wrote music which existed for a thought, for the expression of a sentiment or passion, or for the telling of a story. To do this he cast aside accepted musical conventions in favor of form always dictated by the poetry. Brahms, we may say, was a musician with a feeling for poetry; Wolf was a poet who thought in terms of music.

A Composer For All

In considering the work of the Hugo Wolf Society, let us begin by expressing thanks for the almost incredibly fine results they have achieved. Naturally only those who understand German can ever hope to comprehend thoroughly the subtleties of Wolf's word setting, but the excellent booklets which the Society has provided (with scholarly and helpful introductions by no less an authority than Ernest Newman) have made it possible for anyone to approach this composer without awe. Generally speaking, the performances have been successful and the choice of the singers happy. Naturally this could not always be the case. No singer is perfect, and as one follows even the best of them with the score one learns that none of them is impeccable in matters of musical accuracy and correct diction. Paradoxically, this is the more evident in the work

of the first-raters with whom we have here to deal — for the clearer the diction the more prominent are the slips in pronunciation, and the more immaculate the musicianship the more jarring is the neglected dot or the unsustained tie. I shall not call attention to all these things in the course of this article.

The extent of the Society's work has been impressive. In the six volumes we have 119 songs. Happily this by no means exhausts the composer's output: in fact it does not even cover all the great or famous lieder. It speaks well for the discrimination of the directors that they have not rushed into recording all of the finest songs first; apparently the intention has been to bring forward each song when the proper artist was available, rather than to engage the artists and let them follow their personal preferences.

Composed in Groups

Such was the nature of Wolf's genius that he composed in bunches, usually identifying himself with the works of one poet over a period of time. This fact proves a great convenience in a discussion of the songs, for they divided naturally into groups and are for the most part published in separate volumes accordingly. Roughly, the chronology is as follows. The so-called *Lieder aus der Jugendzeit* and the six *Lieder für eine Frauenstimme* date from 1877-78. Presumably between these and the *Mörike Lieder* belong the thirty-seven songs discovered in Vienna six or seven years ago. A good deal of interest has centered around these new songs, not so much because of the musical value of most of them as because of the light they throw on the development of the composer's genius. At last we can in some manner understand the process by which, as the writer in Grove's Dictionary puts it, "the flood-gates were suddenly opened" in the wonderful *Mörike* songs. The first set of these masterpieces, forty-three lieder in all, was written at fever heat between February and May, 1888. During August and September of that year Wolf concerned himself with Eichendorf, adding a few earlier settings of that poet to make up his collection for publication. October and November find him back with *Mörike*.

From this time until the following February he was at work on the *Goethe Lieder*. The settings from Heise and Geibel's *Spanisches Liederbuch* were begun on October 28, 1889, and completed on April 27, 1890, with a recess which lasted from January 15 to March 28. About a month after finishing these songs he set the six *Alte Weisen* of Keller, which occupied him until the fifth of July. The *Italienisches Liederbuch* was produced in two periods, the first covering the months of October, November and December, 1891, and the second the last days of March and the month of April, 1896. Meanwhile his opera *Der Corregidor* had been composed and produced. Various isolated songs from various periods are gathered together for convenience and published among the *Lieder nach verschiedenen Dichtern*, the crown of the collection, and perhaps of all Wolf's output, being the cycle of three *Michelangelo Lieder*, the last songs he wrote before his collapse in 1897.

Youthful Songs

Of the *Lieder aus der Jugendzeit* only one has been electrically recorded, and that not particularly successfully. This is the fairly well-known *Über Nacht*, a philosophical song with a text by Julius Sturm. To be sure this is not mature Wolf, but the composer's hand is recognizable in many of its details as well as in the general shape and plan of the song as a whole. As the work of any other song writer it would be a little masterpiece. Richard Tauber, who sings it on Decca 20256 (formerly on Columbia G 4081M), is not so mannered here as he often is in singing lieder. In spite of a few distorted vowels, an unpleasant habit of nasal attack and an inappropriate orchestral accompaniment, his record is not altogether bad. The voice is in excellent shape. In the days of acoustic recording Victor once listed another of these youthful efforts, *Bescheidene Liebe*, sung in English as *Modest Heart* by Geraldine Farrar. I have never come across this quite possibly interesting antique (87165).

The first of the *Sechs Lieder für eine Frauenstimme* is probably the simplest of all Wolf's songs. *Morgentau*, as it is called, has been featured on some of Mme. Flagstad's recital programs, but it has not

yet been recorded. When it does appear, if it is acceptably done, I predict for it a real popular success. In somewhat similar vein is the fourth of these songs, *Wiegenlied (Im Sommer)*, the first of two charming cradle songs. This gem is included in the Society's Vol. 6, in an excellent version by Tiana Lemnitz. There is just a suggestion in the voice of the tremolo that has marred some of this singer's latest recordings, but hardly enough to destroy our pleasure in her simple voicing of this tender lullaby. Erika Rokyta, a very high soprano, has also recorded this as well as the charmingly airy *Mausfallen-Sprüchlein* for Oiseau Lyre (discs 46 and 45). Never a profound singer, she is at her best in the *Wiegenlied*, though her best is less satisfying than Lemnitz's. In the latter song the weakness of her diction is a really serious fault.

Of the recently discovered songs two have been done by Karl Erb (Victor 4401) and they are included in the veteran tenor's *Song Recital* (M-501). The two make an interesting contrast. *Andenken* is a setting of a rather mediocre poem by Matthison for which Beethoven also wrote music. Wolf's is, for all its immaturity, a better song than Beethoven's, which begins with a good melody but grows quite tiresome before the end. Wolf's tune is perhaps less distinguished in itself, but his song gathers momentum and ends with quite an eloquent postlude. *Frohe Botschaft*, with its much more interesting text by Robert Reinick and its jaunty counter-melody (prophetic of such things as *Herz, verzage nicht geschwind* from the *Spanisches Liederbuch*) is more easily recognizably Wolf. It has a really fine climax. Erb rises more eloquently to the better song. His *Andenken* would profit by a more sustained line.

His Greatness

After beginning work on the *Mörike Lieder* Wolf never wrote a poor song. All Wolfians, of course, have their favorites and their unfavorites, but these preferences are based rather upon the poems than upon the music that Wolf brought to them. In this lies the secret of his greatness. For if you grant that the object of song writing is to achieve a perfect balance between the natural flow of the words and the

musical requirements of good melody, between the reflection of details of declamation with the underscoring of ideas in the accompanying harmony and the largest concept of the song as a whole, between the voice and the piano, as two independent yet cooperating media of expression — if you grant that this is the goal of the song writer, then you cannot deny that Wolf is the greatest and the most impeccable of all composers in his chosen field. Not only the rightness of his theories and his amazing technique account for this. Perhaps even more we must thank his taste in poetry and the fact that only as a poem appealed to him, and as he sensed its musical possibilities, did he attempt to set it. If ever he was dissatisfied with his work, presumably he tore it up: in his mature music, therefore, there is nothing but gold.

Apparently the right singer for the first of the *Mörike* songs has yet to be found, for the stunning *Der Genesene an die Hoffnung* is still awaiting a recording. It is a thanksgiving addressed by a convalescent to the hope that has made it possible for him to endure his suffering. This first song is one of the really important omissions in the recorded Wolf repertoire. *Der Knabe und das Immelein* is to be had in a rather unimaginative performance by Erika Rokyta on Oiseau Lyre 44. This is a companion song to *Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag* with which it shares its principal melodic germ. The latter song, a heart-breaking little affair, should be compared with the charming and plaintive setting of the same poem by Robert Franz. In the hands of real masters the same thing can be expressed in quite different ways. The performance of Ria Ginster, with Michael Raucheisen at the piano, in Vol. 5 of the Wolf Society is an excellent one. The cool voice of this singer is just the right medium for the music, and her happy trick of lingering between phrases without breaking them is something to be studied.

An Unctuous Performance

Der Tambour rejoices in an unctuous performance by Heinrich Schlusnus and Franz Rupp (Brunswick 85000). The recording (by no means new) is rather too powerful, but the baritone's voicing of the drummer boy's musing is well in the spirit. The same artists have given us the

popular *Er ist's* (Polydor 62655). Although I am more apt to associate this spring song with a light soprano voice, I find the disc a satisfying one, only wanting a truer reproduction of Rupp's fine playing of the exuberant postlude to be completely up to my wishes. The only soprano who has recorded this song seems to be Grete Stücgold, but her disc was an acoustic and has been long out of print (Polydor 20083).

Das Verlassene Mägdlein is surely the most cold and desolate song ever written. The utter loneliness of the poor forsaken girl is to be felt with the very first major thirds of the introduction. Certainly no mood could be established by more economical means, yet no mood could be more strongly felt. This song is done to absolute perfection by the great Elena Gerhardt in Vol. 1 of the Society recordings. The singer's voice, of course, was past its prime before the principles of electric recording were discovered, and in its later condition a liking for it may be an acquired taste. But no one could question the mastery of style or the musical satisfaction to be derived from her exemplary phrasing. Nor can her ability to color her voice for the present character be matched by any of the younger singers I have heard in this song. The recording in the first volume, although it seemed exceptional in 1931, has aged rather sadly, and some imagination, or at least an unusual reproducing machine, is necessary when we would listen to the Gerhardt recordings. For all that, I am sure that those who are lucky enough to own the set, which has not been available for several years, would part first with nearly anything else in their collections. *Das Verlassene Mägdlein* has been more recently recorded by Hulda Lashanska (Victor 2028, M-612) and by Erika Rokyta (Oiseau Lyre 45). Of the two I prefer the latter, but neither is particularly distinguished.

Begegnung brings us Gerhardt again (Vol. 1) and the same general remarks may be applied here as to her singing of the last song. Totally different again from all the lieder that have preceded it, this poem tells of the morning meeting of a young couple who have seen each other not so long before. The rushing piano

part, expressing somehow the fresh atmosphere after a rain, and the telling harmonic change at the mention of the girl, are points worthy of note. And the singer's change of tone at *Da kommt ein Mädchen* and her pointing of the little word *Schelme* cannot be overlooked. The next song in order, *Nimmersatte Liebe*, a wise and ironic piece about love that knows no satiety, is unaccountably absent from the lists, although it was once recorded by Mina Hager for the Chicago Gramophonic Society (50020). As the humor of the words come over us, we cannot fail to wonder at the broad humanity of the Bavarian pastor, Mörike, and of the composer who could so underline his meaning. *Fussreise* breathes the spirit of all outdoors. This song has recently been recorded for HMV by Hans Hermann Nissen (DA 4458) but I have heard only the heavy and unexciting version by Josef von Manowarda (Polydor 23160). *An eine Aeolsharfe*, the next in order, has not been done at all, though it is a song of ravishing beauty — perhaps best to be realized by such a singer as Elisabeth Schumann.

A Universal Favorite

Verborgenheit, of course, is a universal favorite. But for all its immediate appeal, it is one of the hardest of the songs to put over with complete success. Formally it is in straight three-part construction — an unusual thing in Wolf — the third section being an exact repetition of the first. "Tempt me not, O world, with gifts of love," says the poet, "let this heart have its joys and sorrows alone." The Herbert Janssen and Michael Raucheisen version in the fifth volume is quite straight, admirably intelligent, a little unsteady vocally, and generally not particularly distinguished. The veteran tenor Leo Slezak (Polydor 21847) is somehow more in the spirit, though the voice has grown old and is no longer a perfectly responsive instrument. Gerhardt is a bit too careful in this song, and she too lacks vocal freshness (HMV DA 1219). The Lashanska disc in her recent Victor recital hardly merits attention (2028, M-612). But that of Julia Culp (one of her rare electrical records, Electrola EW 8) is so beautifully conceived and so lovely in tone, that we are only too glad to forgive the intonation,

which is slightly less than perfect. Two things alone — her treatment of the words *Schwere* and *woniglich* — are so striking that they would make the record great even if it had no other virtues. I have not heard Culp's 1907 acoustic recording of *Verborgenheit* (Odeon 64005).

Auf einer Wanderung, in spirit akin to *Fussreise*, tells of coming upon a delightful little town on a walking tour. It is not only one of the most charming of all Wolf's lieder, but the occasion for one of the finest performances we have from Gerhardt in the Society's first album. Such things as the lovely change on the words *Nachtigallenchor* are too moving to be imagined, and both the song and the singing are full of the freshness of the morning. However, the generally admirable Coenraad Bos, who accompanies Gerhardt throughout the set, is not altogether at his best in this song: a firmer grasp would have improved his playing of the interlude. There is a new recording of *Auf einer Wanderung*, which I have yet to hear, by Karl Schmitt-Walter and Ferdinand Leitner on Telefunken A 2540.

The delicate *Elfenlied* is done in Vol. 5 in good style by Ria Ginster, though without the finesse and humor I have heard Elisabeth Schumann put into it, and with less than the clearest of diction. Her version, however, is definitely to be preferred to that of Erika Rokyta on Oiseau Lyre 46. Strangely, the melodious and immediately appealing *Der Gärtner* has not been popular among recording artists. Aside from a new disc by Karl Schmitt-Walter (Telefunken A 2540), which I have not heard, there is only Lotte Lehmann's unflattering recording (Victor 1860, M-419), in which the voice is shrill and overamplified, and the piano part pale and ineffective. The next song, *Citronenfalter im April*, another creation of gossamer loveliness, is not too pointedly done by Erika Rokyta on Oiseau Lyre 45.

Kipnis At His Best

The deep and ominous peace of *Um Mitternacht*, one of the most sustained of Wolf's conceptions, is well caught by Alexander Kipnis and Coenraad Bos in Vol. 3. Of this singer's occasionally annoying mannerisms I shall have to speak later: here his magnificent voice and musical in-

telligence carry everything with them. *Seufzer*, a song marked by a peculiarly Wolfian brand of restlessness, is set to one of Mörike's translations of old Latin verses. The performance of Janssen and Raucheisen in Vol. 5 is marred by the baritone's sometimes distressing tremolo, which adds an unwanted touch of sentimentality to the music's deep poignancy. The same, to a lesser degree, is true of his singing of *Auf ein altes Bild*, in the same volume, although the superb beauty of the tone painting in the song easily carries the performance. The mood is better set and sustained in Lotte Lehmann's recent recording (Victor 2030, M-613), in which she has the valuable assistance of Paul Ulanowsky at the piano, and perhaps even more movingly by Karl Erb and Bruno Seidler-Winkler on HMV DA 4448. To me this is unquestionably the tenor's masterpiece. The voice is warm and alive, and every word carries conviction.

Lehmann At Her Best

In der Frühe is another gem included in Lehmann's Wolf recital (2029, M-613) and the soprano's performance is up to her very distinguished best. This early morning mood is a wonderful example of Wolf's ability to make a great deal out of a small musical figure. At the outset a sombre motive is heard, and it is this theme that underlies the entire song, developing with the poetic thought into the peaceful chiming of morning bells. Lehmann's singing of one phrase in this song is so lovely that I cannot forebear to mention it — *Angste, quäle dich nicht länger, meine Seele*. Surely she has never done anything finer. After Lehmann the Rokyta disc (Oiseau Lyre 44) is hardly very interesting.

The next few songs are of a serious character. The heavenly *Schlafendes Jesuskind* is a hushed and reverent meditation on a painting of the sleeping Christ-child by Francesco Albani. The song is a particular favorite with John McCormack, who has recorded it electrically not less than three times. Of these recordings the first and third are familiar to me (Victor 1272 and HMV DB 2868). The latter is of course mechanically much the better. McCormack's singing is always musicianly and intelligent, and we may willingly ac-

cept the Irish tinge that marks his well-enunciated German, but to say that he ever strikes very deep would be to exaggerate. Just where he falls short is emphasized as we listen to Elisabeth Schumann's record (Victor 1840, M-383). This singer's utterance is dreamy and subdued, as of one in a trance, and the manner in which she caresses the words — especially *O wer sehen könnte* — is magical in its effect. Of course she has the advantage of splendid recording (though perhaps no better than that of McCormack's latest record) and of the piano accompaniment, whereas the tenor sings to the orchestra. *Karwoche* is the next song, and I, for one, am eagerly awaiting a recording of it. I can remember very vividly a concert of the old Friends of Music some ten or fifteen years ago, at which Elisabeth Rethberg sang a group of Wolf songs with orchestra, including *Karwoche*, *Schlafendes Jesuskind* and *Auf ein altes Bild*. I suppose that program will always be one of my fondest memories, as it was my introduction to these wonderful lieder. The miracle of awakening nature in the spring and the religious significance of Holy Week are described in *Karwoche*, most exacting of songs.

A New Year's Song

We are most fortunate in our interpreter for the next in order, *Zum neuen Jahr*, or *New Year's Song*. Karl Erb is one of the few tenors who not only can master its almost impossible *tessitura*, but can make its meaning felt as well. Here again we may be bothered a little by pronunciation (South German this time) but the performance is too compelling for this to matter much. The lovely bell-like figure in the piano part is developed in the characteristic Wolfian manner, with striking changes of key, and a magnificent build-up to the climax. On this record the possibilities of the piano part are happily realized by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. The disc is a *must* for any lieder collection (Victor 4400, M-501).

The impressive *Gebet* which follows is one of the best known of the songs. It furnishes another example of Wolf's distinctive type of melody, divided between the voice and piano parts. Typical, too, is the unresolved finish of the vocal line,

and the inexplicable but apparently inevitable postlude, in which the piano calmly finishes the melody it has begun, and sinks into silence as if with a benediction. The Jensen record in Vol. 5 is one of the very best things he has done, and that of Schlusnus (Polydor 62784) is perhaps even more effective in its big and straight simplicity. The Karl Erb recording (HMV EG 3591) I have not heard, but I can warn my readers to avoid the wobbly and dull one by Josef von Manowarda (Polydor

23159). *An den Schlaf* is another translation from the Latin, in mood a sort of answer to *Seufzer*, considered above. Karl Erb is the singer selected by the Society for this song (Vol. 6). He sings it with fine tone quality despite his sixty years, and builds a telling climax. The pulse of the song as he gives it, however, is a little metronomic, and he is guilty of breaking one phrase unfortunately.

(To be continued next month)

Technical Topics

Leland L. Chapman

FREQUENCY modulation, known as FM, at first glance may appear to have little in common with phonograph records, but it may have an important effect upon them.

Standard amplitude modulation broadcasts by means of interstate hookups are limited to about 5,000 cycles as the upper frequency. In a few instances programs operating close to a transmitter give better fidelity but these are the exceptions. Under these circumstances, there is little incentive to put into a radio an amplifier or speaker that has a frequency response much above 5,000 cycles. Commercial records in most instances today are cut to about 7,000 cycles, but inasmuch as most records are played either through a radio, or with a radio-combination, the speaker and amplifier in many instances do not reproduce these frequencies and are the limiting factors on the upper frequency reproduction. This is particularly true in small radios.

Frequency modulation broadcasts are capable of producing frequencies over the entire audible range and without any difficulty up to 10,000 cycles per second. This has made it necessary for manufacturers to develop speakers which can be produced on a mass production basis for reproducing this extended frequency response because such speakers must be used in the new FM radios. It is now possible,

therefore, to get speakers at a reasonable price having a much higher frequency range. This is all to the benefit of the phonophiles who can now get better speakers for record reproduction at no more cost than before.

The Jensen company, for example, have placed on the market an eight-inch permanent magnet dynamic speaker having a response up to 10,000 cycles per second, which is available for less than \$5.00. They have also developed a "concentric" dual speaker in which a small speaker is mounted in the center and in front of the larger speaker. The larger speaker handles the lower frequencies and the smaller speaker the higher, the cross-over being at about 2,000 cycles per second. This speaker is advertised as having a range of 35 to 14,000 cycles per second. Obviously such high frequency response is not necessary for record reproduction but it is indicative of the fact that now that there is use for higher fidelity speakers on a mass production basis, the manufacturers have been capable of supplying it at no great increase in price.

The FM radios, which include high fidelity speakers and equipment, may be expected to give better results when used for reproducing records. As the situation stands today, it seems that the phonograph record itself is the principal limiting factor

in frequency response and that equipment throughout the chain from pick-up to speaker is available at moderate prices that reproduces much better than what is on the record. In fact, in designing equipment today, there is a school that argues that it is advisable to limit the fidelity of the equipment, particularly the pick-up and the speaker, to frequencies not appreciably beyond that contained in the record. Distortion at the higher frequencies is particularly objectionable to the ear, and there are instances in which high fidelity installations for use with commercial records have proved disappointing because they picked up and reproduced all the distortion and extraneous frequencies that were contained in the record and that were not reproducible on less exacting equipment.

FM may in the future have another effect beneficial to phonograph owners in the way of stimulating improvement in

records. Heretofore, with amplitude modulation broadcasts limited to 5,000 cycles and low dynamic range, and with records reproducing 7,000 to 7,500 cycles with better dynamics, it has been possible to make records sound much better than the radio. Everyone, no doubt, has had this experience. Under such circumstances there is little incentive to improve records. With FM coming into the foreground and with FM broadcasts and receivers going to 10,000 cycles or above, and an unlimited dynamic range, the situation may in the next several years become reversed, that is, FM broadcasts will sound better than records. This will serve as an incentive to the record manufacturers to improve their product so as to make it comparable with the FM broadcasts. Otherwise they might feel that people would prefer listening to the radio rather than to the phonograph, a situation the reverse of that which exists in many homes.

Swing Music Notes

Enzo Archetti

Cootie Williams, who set the jazz world agog by suddenly handing in his notice after having been with Duke Ellington for eleven years, has become a member of Benny Goodman's new band. The move was a surprise to everyone, possibly even to Duke himself, because Ellington issued a strongly worded statement for publication immediately after Cootie made known his intention.

During the past national election there was much talk of the "indispensable man". There is no such man, of course, so Cootie Williams is not one by any means. But there is no denying that his departure from the Ellington band is a serious matter: it will affect certain characteristics of the Duke's future music. It is a move very much regretted by jazz lovers in general. Cootie's style and character fitted well in the Ellington picture. It is difficult to see how that style and character will fit in the Goodman picture — if we judge the

new Goodman band by comparison with previous B.G. outfits.

As nearly as can be ascertained there were no clash of temperaments, no arguments, and no dispute over salaries to cause Cootie's departure from the fold. As Duke himself said: "I assume that the obvious distinction of working with a white band was the determining factor."

The Goodman band is now practically complete with Cootie Williams and Charlie Christian as its only two Negro members although Teddy Wilson is still a possibility. There is even some talk that Count Basie will junk his band so that he, too, can join B. G. The Ellington vacancy has been temporarily filled by Ray Nance, a former Horace Henderson man and Chicago bandleader himself. There is a possibility that Sidney de Paris or Taft Jordan may fill the chair permanently.

Duke Ellington's orchestra will give a two hour jazz concert at Colgate Univer-

sity, Hamilton, N. Y. on December 12. On the same night Benny Goodman appears as soloist with the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall. The Duke and B. G. are certainly in the news this month.

A new jazz club has been organized in New York City with headquarters at 115 West 86th Street and directed by Sidney J. Stiber. It is known as the Metropolitan Hot Club and it's the first of its kind since the demise of the U.H.C.A. several years ago.

The new edition of *Hot Discography* has been released and a right handsome and useful book it is, too. Just in time for Christmas. It should gladden the hearts of jazz lovers everywhere. At present it is available only at the Commodore Music Shop but soon it will be carried by all record and book stores.

The first in Decca's series of "anthology" sets is a *Boogie Woogie Album* in which are collected six band numbers and six piano solos — all previous releases which Decca feels are representative. A booklet by Dave Dexter, Jr. is included. The next to appear is a *Kansas City Jazz Album* and then two entitled *White Jazz* and *Colored Jazz*. The latter will include examples by Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Andy Kirk, Coleman Hawkins, Count Basie, Johnny Dodds, Sidney Bechet, Jimmie Noone, Jimmy Lunceford, Earl Hines, Fletcher Henderson and Albert Ammons.

In an article called *Jazz Swings to Classics*, written by Lanfranco Rasponi and published in the *Sunday Times* of November 24, Paul Laval, the ubiquitous popular music maker who is partly responsible for that very entertaining radio program *The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street*, is credited with some very silly observations on jazz. Among other things he says: "The days of im-

provization in jazz have gone and the variations on a theme have passed, too" and "Almost anything that is composed these days is written out for the performer. Ninety percent of the swing bands have to read what they play now, and there is no more room for amateurs". And further: "The proof that jazz writers are at present trying to make their tunes highbrow is that pieces of great composers are being used and with great success. Debussy's *Reverie* has become *My Reverie*, Ravel's *Pavane pour une Infante défunte* has developed into *The Lamp is Low*, one of the movements of Tschaikowsky's *Fifth Symphony* has inspired *Our Love* and the andante cantabile from Tschaikowsky's *quartet in D major* originated *The Isle of May*."

People who should know better still insist upon confusing true jazz (currently misnamed swing music) with popular music which is intended for dancing or just general entertainment purposes. Mr. Laval should stick to making music for *Basin Street* and his other programs. He is much more entertaining on his clarinet.

Harry Lim, the well-known Javanese jazz critic, is now in Chicago staging jam sessions just as he did in New York last winter. From all reports he is doing very well, which is not too surprising, knowing his character. Besides Chicago is remarkably rich in good musicians right now.

Earl Hines' new orchestra is now complete and on the road. The present set-up is: Emmet Berry, Harry Jackson, Rostelle Reese, trumpets; Edward Fant, Joe McLewis, John Ewing, trombones; Frankie Jaxon, Willie Randall, Bud Johnson, Leroy Harris, Scoops Carey, reeds; Truck Parham, bass; Curley Ramey, guitar; Alvin Burroughs, drums; plus Hines on piano, of course. It sounds like the best Earl Hines has had yet.

Protected By Music

A member of the staff of the *London Music Times*, Mr. W. McNught, reports in letter to a friend: "My camp bed is twenty feet underground, with four stories of Novello's stock above. The bed is in a narrow alley of stock. To the left of me are battalions of Maunder's *Penitence*, *Pardon and Peace* and to the right of me are armies of Costa's *Eli*. I feel pretty safe with the staves and staffs on either hand."

Record Notes and Reviews

It is the purpose of this department to review monthly all worthwhile recordings. If at any time we happen to omit a record in which the reader is particularly interested, we shall be glad to give our opinion of the recording on written request. Correspondents are requested to enclose self-addressed stamped envelopes.

▲ Columbia seems to be having its difficulties. During the last three months, for the first time in the six years of our existence, we have failed to receive Columbia discs in time for adequate review. A letter from the company assures us that next month the reviewers' service will be entirely in order again, since the Constance Hope Associates of New York have been engaged to handle it. In order not to deprive our readers of all mention of the Columbia releases, we made arrangements this month to hear the major portion of the latest issues elsewhere.

Orchestra

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6 in F major (Pastoral)*, Op. 68; played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Bruno Walter. Victor set G-20, five discs, price \$4.00.

▲ This symphony was composed in the country around Heiligenstadt in the summer of 1808. Hale suggests that the descriptive headings perhaps were an afterthought, for in the sketchbook of the first movement Beethoven appended the note: "Characteristic Symphony. The recollections of life in the country . . . The Hearer is left to find out the situations for himself." But Beethoven perhaps did not want his audience to look upon the music from a purely programmatic point of view, for on the back of the title page of the first violin part in the first edition were inscribed the words "more an expression of feeling than painting."

I confess that until several years ago I never cared too much for the *Pastoral*; a Koussevitzky reading at the Berkshire Festival changed my mind for me. At that time I remember saying to myself "Oh . . . that thing again . . .", wandering from my seat and stretching out under a tree near the auditorium for a smoke. I remember a moonlit night and a few silvery clouds and the hushed tension of

about six thousand people waiting for the opening movement. I remember watching cigarette smoke drift up to the moon and I recall thinking idly upon the appropriateness of the surroundings. Came quietly the opening allegro — played more like an allegretto — and after a few measures these drooping ears came to attention and you have no idea how much I suddenly loved the *Pastoral Symphony*.

Thus, while I swell with righteous indignation at an unnecessary duplication of some other standard symphony, I shut my eyes and smile tolerantly at the emergence of another *Pastoral*, especially when it is as well done as the present set. There must be about seven versions available; this is among the best, and only the Toscanini and Paray versions can match it. The Mitropoulos set is too finely etched, too steel-sharp for my taste. It has none of the gentleness that must be a necessary part of the music. I prefer Walter's interpretation even to Toscanini's, though not many will agree with that preference. Walter's set was first issued by H.M.V. sometime around 1937, but the recording is as good as the Toscanini or the excellent Paray set. One blemish is noticeable; it occurs in measure 93 of the fourth movement, where the piccolo does very curious things. With the exception of this minor fault the recording is good. And the price — \$4.00 against \$5.50 for the other versions — is also good. But the music is better.

—H.C.S.

DUKAS: *L'Apprenti Sorcier* (3 sides); and RIMSKY-KORSAKOW (arr. Stokowski): *Ivan the Terrible — Overture to Act 3*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Leopold Stokowski. Victor set M-717, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ The program of the Dukas is too familiar to quote here. It is based upon a ballad by Goethe, which, according to the

annotator, was in turn taken from a dialogue written by the Greek satirist Lucian, who lived from about 120 to 180 A.D. Thus it may be noted the story of the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* dates back to 1800 years.

Stokowski made the present recording all of three years ago. It is the same recording that he later "enhanced" for the Walt Disney film *Fantasia*, now being shown. The musical version for the film, like the rest of the music used in the picture, has been dynamically altered at will by the conductor, with not always the most pleasing or artistic results. In connection with the picture, this procedure of altering the natural "concert-hall" dynamics of the music is referred to as "Fantasound". Fantastic sound would be a better word for it. This is accomplished by first making a recording, then re-recording it and, while doing so, manipulating the controls at the whim or wish of the conductor to attain exaggerations of sound either way that he may desire. We have pointed out before that Stokowski has much of the Barnum in him; certainly this would seem to bear out our contention.

Curiously the present performance by Stokowski lacks a lot of the élan and sparkle that his earlier recording of this scherzo owned. The tempo here is over-deliberate and by no means as volatile or as Gallic in spirit as it might be. One is reminded of the statement that Stokowski made recently in connection with his orchestration of Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Although he professed to regard Ravel's orchestration of that work as a masterpiece, he felt that it was too Gallic in spirit and since Moussorgsky's music was, "the quintessence of the Slavic spirit", he aimed in his orchestration to preserve and express that Slavic spirit. One feels inclined to query whether the Slavic spirit was not taken over into the recording of *L'Apprenti Sorcier*, for the Gallic spirit is less apparent than it should be. At least that is the impression one gains after rehearsing the recent recording that Philippe Gaubert made of his work with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra. Gaubert is more volatile in his readings, his apprentice is a more sprightly fellow.

From the standpoint of orchestral playing the palm goes to the present set; the smoothness of the Philadelphia Orchestra's strings and the individual playing of the featured instruments are far superior to those of the French orchestra. And from the recording standpoint also, the present set has an edge on the other.

Never having heard Rimsky-Korsakow's opera, *Ivan the Terrible*, we have no idea what Stokowski has done in rearranging the present excerpt. It is not first-rate Rimsky, being tonally rather than musically impressive, which may well be due to Stokowski. The recording is excellent.

—P.G.

GRIEG: *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set X-180, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ I regard Beecham as one of the three greatest conductors now living (don't ask me who the other two are), and I think that like all great men of music he has the gift of performing works like this with freshness and unusual sympathy. Kreisler has this gift in his violin playing, and McCormack had it in his singing. They can make what all too often in repetition becomes commonplace assume new vitality for some of us, only for the moment. There is far more skill in making music like this live again than in giving a good performance of more edifying music. No doubt there will be many to say that Beecham should not waste his time on music of this calibre but should be conducting more worthy material. However, it may be also said that all too many of us forget what music like this can mean to those hearing it for the first time. The subtle shading, the rare precision, and, where the music requires it, the rich tonal breadth that Beecham attains are always a joy to the listener who appreciates fine orchestral playing. What a magnificent orchestra the London Philharmonic is under Beecham's direction; it is of course *his* orchestra, an organization that he formed and built. Under no other conductor does this group perform as it does under Beecham. It is unpleasant to think what the war will do to an organization of this kind.

There are four movements in this suite: *Morning*, *The Death of Ase*, *Anitra's Dance* and *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. In each, Beecham succeeds in conveying tonal shades never before heard in a recording. The reproduction here is excellent.

—P.H.R.

HUMPERDINCK: *Hansel and Gretel* — Suite; played by the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony, direction of Howard Barlow. Columbia set M-424, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.75.

▲ Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* is somehow always associated with the Christmas spirit, and so it is not inappropriate that this set be issued now. This is not a suite in the sense that the old Polydor recording arranged and conducted by Oscar Fried was. Fried's two-record arrangement of music from the opera was a particular delight, and it is to be regretted that Mr. Barlow did not see fit to duplicate it; for it was extremely popular in its day and is no longer available. The present suite is made up of the *Overture* (a new recording of which was hardly needed since we have the recent performance by Boult and the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra), the *Dream Pantomime*, and the *Waltz*. Boult has also recorded the *Pantomime* music on a single disc, but this latter recording dates back to 1935. The point I am seeking to bring out is that people already owning the Boult records will find nothing here to incite new interest, for the *Waltz* occupies only half of one disc.

We have had occasion to admire the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony on records before, and here under the fine direction of Mr. Barlow the orchestra confirms our opinion that it is one of the best organizations of its kind now before the public. The playing, except for some roughness in the horn section, is marked by fine precision and tonal smoothness; and the recording is excellently accomplished. To those who do not own records of this music, we certainly recommend that they get acquainted with this set. There is a warm humanity to Humperdinck, and the sentiment of this music is

the kind that never grows stale. The selections are divided: *Overture* (disc 17219-D), *Dream Pantomime* (3 sides of discs 17220/21-D), and *Waltz* (last half of disc 17221-D).

—P.H.R.

LALO: *Rhapsodie Norvégienne*; played by the Paris Conservatory Orchestra, direction Eugène Bigot. Victor disc 36347, price 75c.

▲ Lalo was so essentially Gallic that it seems strange to find him interested in Norwegian tunes. Although there is evidenced here much of this composer's characteristic piquancy and grace, this composition cannot be rated as one of his major works. There is some nicely contrasted writing, and the tunes he has chosen are in themselves good. Eugène Bigot, with his incisive direction, gives a good performance of this music. As originally written the rhapsody was longer than it is here, but the few times we have heard it played in public it has generally been given in an incised version, very probably the one employed here. The recording is excellently realized, with the triangle coming through unusually well in the latter half.

—P. G.

MOSZKOWSKI: *Spanish Dances* Nos. 2 (*G. min.*) and 5 (*Bolero in D*) from *Book I*, Op. 12; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc 4532, price 75c.

▲ Both of these dances used to be much more popular than they are today. They are typical of the best in salon music, and are good examples of what was considered elegant music in the best Victorian circles. Of course, the music is as Spanish as *bouillabaise* or *déjeuner à la fourchette*. Still, both of the selections are pretty, the recording is good, and Manuel Valerio's solo clarinet comes through very nicely.

—H.C.S.

ROSSINI: *William Tell* — *Ballet Music*; played by Sadler's Wells Orchestra, direction Constant Lambert. Victor 10-inch discs 26743/44, price 50c each.

▲ Rossini has the gift of writing infectious melody and rhythm, and here we find him in a happy mood. In the third act of *William Tell*, the tyrant (or was it Fuchrer) allows the peasants to celebrate the centenary of the Austrian occupation of Switzerland. The ballet is part of the cele-

bration. When the opera was first presented the prima ballerini was the famous Taglioni, who undoubtedly shared in the honors of the evening. Lambert plays this music with excellent style, and the recording is good.

SCHIASSI: *Christmas Symphony*; played by Arthur Fiedler's Sinfonietta. Victor disc 13446, price \$1.00.

▲ If I were asked to select a single disc from among the newest records to give as a present at Christmas this year, I would unhesitatingly recommend this one. It is a singularly beautiful little work, which arouses lively curiosity about its composer, of whom little is known except that he was an Italian violinist and composer who lived in the early part of the 18th century. It is very close in spirit to the *Christmas Night Concerto* of Corelli with its classical construction and harmonic symmetry. It is in five short movements, each of which is a little gem: an opening Adagio, an Allegro, a Largo, a Spiccato, and an Andante.

Whether or not Schiassi had a definite picture in mind when he wrote this little symphony we cannot say. The Nativity was celebrated in much music of this period, and usually such a work was intended to convey a realistic musical picture. We know that the Pastorale, or final section, of Corelli's work was intended to represent the angels hovering over Bethlehem, a tonal counterpart of Botticelli's famous Nativity. Schiassi may also have a program in mind but the fact that we do not know of it does not in any way detract from the enjoyment of this endearing music. Its name suggests its inspiration, and the moods are in turn fittingly contemplative, serene, and joyful. The final Andante, with its exquisitely sensitive ending in which the harpsichord plays a significant part, left me with the immediate desire to hear the little work again. I have no doubt it will do the same thing with many readers.

Arthur Fiedler gives this music a sympathetic and understanding performance. I am certain he will have the gratitude of a great many music lovers for bringing such a fine work to their attention. The recording is on a par with the playing. There is room for much more of this kind

of music on records, and I know that dozens of readers join me in hoping that Victor will give us many more discs of early orchestral chamber music.

—P.H.R.

SIBELIUS: *Belsbazzar's Feast*, Op. 51; played by the London Symphony Orchestra, direction of Robert Kajanus. Victor set M-715, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ It would be fun to play these records for a group of people and ask them to tell you who they thought wrote the music. I doubt if anyone in the group would say Sibelius. This is not by way of knocking the music, which, although it does not represent Sibelius at his best, nonetheless has definite attributes. Gray tells us that this is the only work in which Sibelius has deliberately cultivated exotic coloring. There was a good reason for this: the pieces were composed as incidental music to a play of the same name by the composer's friend, Hjalmar Procopé. The period of composition was a little before that of the *Third Symphony*.

There are four pieces — *Oriental Procession*; *Solitude*; *Night Music*; and *Khadra's Dance*. The first and last of these are reminiscent of Ippolitow-Ivanow and Grieg, and also the *Beni Mora Suite* of Gustave Holst. The two inner pieces are more personal. *Solitude* has a poetic serenity and an interesting melodic bass. *Night Music* is quite evidently a nocturne, and of the four pieces is the most typical of the composer. I can well imagine that the two inner movements may prove favorites with Sibelius' fans. The whole suite offers interesting testimony of the composer's ability to create a mood and to obtain appropriate tonal coloring with the simplest orchestration. The work is scored for a small orchestra consisting of strings, woodwinds without bassoon, horns

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Concerto No. 3, in D minor (Rachmaninoff, Op. 30) Sergei Rachmaninoff and the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy.

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Incidental Music for Belshazzar's Feast Sibelius, Opus 51 — Robert Kajanus conducting The London Symphony Orchestra.

Victor honors the 75th birthday of Jan Sibelius by issuing several of the master's works. In this highly interesting album set, the late Robert Kajanus, friend and relative of the composer, and foremost among his interpreters, gives a vital and definitive reading of the music. Album M-715, 4 sides. New list price \$2.50. Single recordings feature Romance in C Major played by the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, directed by Sir Adrian Boult (Victor 13499; new list price \$1.00) and two songs Svarta Rosor and Saf, Saf, Susa by Jussi Bjöerling. (Victor 4531; new list price 75c).

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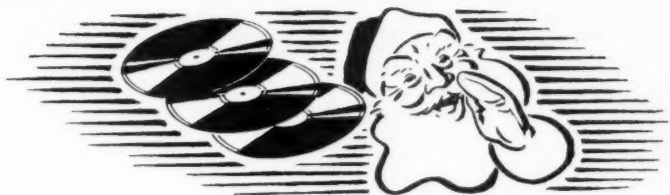
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and the requisite percussion for the Oriental effects.

Kajanus was one of the earliest champions of Sibelius' music; he was chosen by the composer to record his first two symphonies when the Finnish Government sponsored their recording. His performance is marked by fine precision and expression. One of the surprising features of this set is the recording, which must date from not later than 1933, since that is the year in which Kajanus died. It is unusually clear and lifelike, and will not disappoint the most exacting record buyer. —P.H.R.

SIBELIUS: *Romance in C major, Opus 42*; played by B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, direction Sir Adrian Boult. Victor disc 13499, price \$1.00.

▲ This is early Sibelius, written just after his first two symphonies in 1903. As in parts of those early symphonies, there is a Tchaikowskian touch here. The mood is frankly romantic with a leaning towards sentimentality. It is a pleasant, if unimportant piece. I suspect it might be well to put it down as a youthful indiscretion, one that lots of us will find ourselves enjoying in moments of relaxation. As Cecil Gray has remarked, there is nothing reprehensible in "providing the public with innocent enjoyment and diversion".

Of the popular side of Sibelius' art, Gray says that far from being a fault, it is a positive virtue, like the composer's "immense fertility, and one of the signs of his true greatness". It is after all no sin to be familiar and accessible in music, and if such music as this can assist in creating interest in its composer it surely deserves the respect of the most captious.

Boult gives a smoothly contrived and expressive performance of this music, one which wisely places no undue stress upon its sentiment. The work is for string orchestra and this recording offers particularly pleasing projection of string tone. An earlier recording by the Boyd Neel String Orchestra (Decca) lacks the finesse of Boult's finely phrased reading.

—P.H.R.

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op 43*; played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York,

direction of John Barbirolli. Columbia set M-423, five discs, price \$5.50.

▲ We are told that Barbirolli has been admired for his performance of this work; which would indicate that there may be a waiting public for the present recording. As a recording, this set is much better than the recent Brahms *Second Symphony* made by Barbirolli. It is fuller and more sonorous in its tonal quality, but at the same time there is over-amplification of the highs, which resulted in screaming fortissimi on the machine on which I heard the records. The recording was heard in a record booth, and we were unable to ascertain whether its attenuated quality would be audible on a good outfit also. Next month we hope to hear the Columbia recordings under more favorable conditions.

In November, 1935, Victor released Koussevitzky's famous reading of this work. Comment on Sibelius' approval of various conductors' performances of his symphonies will be found in the article on Sibelius printed elsewhere in this issue. Whether or not that means anything may be left to the opinion of the listener. To our way of thinking, Sibelius certainly must have been impressed with Koussevitzky's interpretation of this work, for, as we said when we reviewed that set, it is doubtful if anyone else achieves a more thrilling and imaginative reading. After hearing the Barbirolli version, I find my doubts unassailed. For Barbirolli does not display the imagination that Koussevitzky does. There are some who contend that Koussevitzky takes the first movement too slowly. Certainly Barbirolli takes it faster than Koussevitzky does. His opening is much faster, but curiously, when the composer returns to the first tempo later on in the movement Barbirolli does not observe the speed of his opening. Furthermore, while the Philharmonic is a magnificent orchestra, containing some of the finest individual players in this country, the quality of tone in the playing here is at times rough and lacking in precision. Throughout the entire symphony this type of playing prevails. One will not deny that the conductor gives a forceful, effec-

tive reading, but to us it does not match the artistic accomplishment of the Koussevitzky version.

—P.H.R.

STRAUSS: *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Op. 30; played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, direction Frederick Stock. Columbia set M-421, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ When the dynamic microphone was adopted in recording around the end of 1934, one of the first recordings issued by Victor employing the new microphone technique was Koussevitzky's salient performance of this work. The opening pages representing the breaking of dawn and its full climax, is reproduced with amazing realism in the Koussevitzky set. There have been some who felt the superb sonorities of this set were too realistic for their own good, and many have claimed that the recording was a problem to reproduce. Be that as it may, that album is still one

of the major phonographic attainments of the past decade.

The new version of *Also sprach Zarathustra* presents fewer problems of tonal manipulation. It is splendidly recorded, judged by modern standards, with an admirable clarity throughout, but it lacks the impact and the excitement of the earlier set and the quickening emotional surge of Koussevitzky's dramatic reading. Stock is a sound musician who never lets us down, and I am certain that if the Koussevitzky set did not exist one would find his reading entirely satisfactory. However, the comparison is inevitable. Stock does succeed in making more out of certain lesser sections of the work like the *Dance Song*; but it is in the bigger moments that the vitality and imagination of Koussevitzky are more compelling.

It should be added that this set was not heard under the most desirable conditions.

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BACH: *Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 in C minor*, for two claviers and strings; played by the Manuel and Williamson Harpsichord Ensemble. Musicraft set 46, four discs, price \$6.00.

▲ Bach arranged these works himself from concertos originally written for two violins and strings. The first concerto here does not survive in its original form, but the second is widely admired and known as the *D minor Concerto*. The first concerto is an earlier work, and far less inspired than the second, which is more spacious and imaginative in its quick movements. No. 1 is far too square-toed and scholarly in our estimation, and certainly the overly meticulous performance of the players here does not relieve this impression.

The playing of the second work is smoother and more elastic, which is due as much to Bach as to the performers. This concerto is not as impressive in the two-clavier arrangement as in the version for two violins. As Schweitzer says: "How Bach could venture to transfer the two cantabile violin parts in the largo of this work to the cembalo, with its abrupt tone, must be left to himself to answer. Had he not done it we would be protesting in his name today so un-Bach-like a transcription."

The Manuel and Williamson Harpsichord Ensemble is composed of two harpsichords and eight or nine strings. Philip Manuel and Gavin Williamson are Chicago musicians who have contributed much to the musical life of their native city. Every year these two artists sponsor a short festival of old music. This is the first of a series of recordings of this ensemble planned for release by Musicraft. The recording here is good, entirely satisfactory for the material presented, except that a better balance between the harpsichord and strings could have been obtained.

—P.H.R.

RACHMANINOFF: *Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30*; played by Sergei Rachmaninoff and the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction of Eugene Ormandy. Victor set M-710, nine sides, price \$5.00.

▲ One listens to this work and enjoys it, but with a faint sense of exasperation. In the *Second Concerto* the composer wears his heart on his sleeve frankly and without shame; here he says the same things in much the same manner, except that he places them under a more pretentious, glittering covelet. There is no appreciable musical advance; he not deceived by the broader contours. Surely the Rachmaninoff footprints on the sands of time did not point altogether forward when he composed the work.

And so, despite the flow and color of the concerto there is the uneasy feeling that one has heard the same thing before. Yet, we repeat, one listens to the work and enjoys it. For one thing, a listener must be singularly unresponsive not to react to the great skill with which Rachmaninoff merges piano and orchestra into a pulsating unit. And then there is a little matter of piano playing — a great pianist performing this concerto can make the pulse pound prestissimo. Rachmaninoff is a great pianist, and with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, supplemented by good recording, the set provides some thrilling moments, making one forget the musical deficiencies. There is only one way to listen to a work like this: bathe yourself in the sound and in the give-and-take of piano with orchestra. For this is not intellectual but physiological music; thrills there are in plenty, but if one stops to ponder upon why he is being excited the music will suddenly cease to be exciting, and the artificiality and sentimentalism become acutely evident. Thus we suggest that the listener forget about the esthetic value of the work and take it for what it is rather than for what it should be.

With Rachmaninoff playing here like a young and healthy Viking, hurling terrific chords and scale passages, and with Ormandy matching him with a lusty and well adjusted accompaniment, those music lovers who almost defy the pianist will find their God in his heaven and all right with the world. Rachmaninoff, as was

to be expected, gives a remarkable performance of his fantastically difficult concerto. There are four cuts in the presentation — one in the first two movements and two in the last. The old Horowitz-Coates recording, which was released early in 1932, adopts only the first-movement excision found here — from two measures after section 10 (in the Gutheil-Breitkopf and Härtel score) to section 11; eight measures in all. Naturally the present version is a much superior recording, but it will be a very brave man who dares to state which of the soloists plays better. We listened carefully to both sets; the performances are very similar. The only outstanding difference is that Horowitz's left hand is a little clearer, and he does not use the amount of pedal that Rachmaninoff uses. The latter plays the cadenza toward the end of the last movement as written — chordally; Horowitz apparently plays it in octaves. The sometimes blurred quality of the left hand part in the new set might be attributed to microphone placement, for I have never heard Rachmaninoff bluff, nor can I even conceive it.

—H.C.S.

SCHUBERT-LISZT: *Fantasia in C major, Op. 15 (The Wanderer)*; played by Edward Kilenyi and Symphony Orchestra, directed by Selmar Meyrowitz. Columbia set M-426, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ Schubert's *Fantasia in C major* for piano, generally referred to as the *Wanderer Fantasy* because the second movement makes use of material from the composer's song of the same name, is not one of his greatest or most grateful works for piano. Its intended effects do not, by any means, all come off. Too, as in much of Schubert's piano music, there is considerable redundancy. A half-dozen years ago Edwin Fischer made a recording of the original Schubert version (Victor set M-229), but this has been cut out of the present catalogue. This is the first version of the Liszt arrangement of the work to be released in this country, although two other versions have been issued in England.

The *Fantasia* is most effective in the Liszt transcription, more so in my estima-

tion than in the original. Liszt's orchestra seems uncannily right, and for once he has made a faithful arrangement of the Schubert score; in fact the music is followed bar by bar, as the annotator says, "without gratuitous additions". Of the orchestration, Nicholas Slonimsky says in the booklet furnished with the present set: "When the orchestra comes in, it either reinforces the harmony, or takes over the melody, the basses or underlying rhythm leaving the piano freedom of action in elaborate passages . . . The result is a piano concerto, or, more accurately, a *Concertstück* (Concert-Piece) for piano and orchestra, in which the piano is not an absolute virtuoso reigning over an accompanying orchestra, but rather a collaborator subordinating the importance of his part to the greater significance of the whole."

The second movement is the core of the work; its opening phrase is drawn from the passage in the song to the words *Die Sonne dünkt mich hier so kalt* (How pale the sunlight seemeth here). In the scherzo, which follows, there will be recognized a tune which was widely popularized in *Lilac Time*.

Kilenyi recorded this work about five years ago in Paris. He was fortunate to have the collaboration of as sympathetic a musician as Meyrowitz. The conductor's rhythmic fluency and easy assurance are gratifyingly manifested in this work. Kilenyi wisely subordinates his part to the good of the whole. He plays this work as well as anything he has done on records. It may be argued that Fischer gave, on the whole, a more sensitive reading, but Fischer was not playing the Liszt arrangement. Kilenyi does not seek to make more out of this music than is in it; and in only one movement, the second, could we have asked for a more searching approach. The restraint employed by Kilenyi is in keeping here, but there is an air of mystery to this movement which he does not fully convey; that the piano part is not always as clear as it might be in this movement

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is due in part to the orchestration. But on the whole, it can be honestly said that Kilenyi and Meyrowitz are a well matched team and of the same mind throughout the work. The recording is entirely satisfactory.

—P.H.R.

Chamber Music

BARTOK: *Rhapsody No. 1*; played by Joseph Szigeti (violin) and Béla Bartók (piano). Columbia disc 11410-D, price \$1.00.

▲ Whether or not this music is based upon definite folk tunes we do not know; we do know however, that the folk music of the composer's native Transylvania has influenced his style and was responsible at least in part for this composition. There are two movements here, each occupying a single face. The tunes are for the most part bright and gay, suggesting dance melodies. The composer treats them ingeniously, simply at first and then with difficult technical material for the violin. The first movement lacks the variety of the second, where the violin is exploited far more brilliantly. The music is entirely accessible, although we can well imagine that it is no easier to play than was the composer's *Contrasts*, issued last month.

The present *Rhapsody* is not far removed from the *Roumanian Folk Dances* (Columbia disc 17089-D) and the *Hungarian Folk Tunes* (Columbia disc 7247-D), which Szigeti and the composer recorded several years ago in Europe. Columbia can be justly proud of the collaboration of Szigeti and Bartók, since they are not only two great musicians, but two who own a rare sympathetic regard for and understanding of each other's artistry. The recording does full justice to the playing.

—P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet No. 5 in A major, Op 18, No. 5*; played by the Coolidge Quartet. Victor set M-716, five sides, price \$3.00.

▲ Those who play this quartet directly after the preceding one in C minor are apt to decry its restraint, and some have even gone so far as to refer to it as a "trifling achievement". We have previously pointed out that we regard this as an absurd way of approaching this lovely

music. In Beethoven's symphonies a poignantly dramatic work is followed by one more lyric and restrained. Admitting a lack of depth to this music, we still find much to admire. Bekker has called this work "a perfect type of the concrete quartet". The first movement is truly "full of pure delicate melody and light handed adventure" (Hadow), and decidedly Mozartean. Could anything be more charming than the melodies that open side two of the recording? The minuet, which is given second place in the score, is one of the few in which Beethoven captures the style of the 18th-century minuet. The slow movement, andante cantabile, has been called the most personal of the four, but to us it is the weakest. The theme is not particularly impressive, and its treatment in the variation form does not sustain interest. The finale, in sonata form, is exhilarating; its second subject is almost note for note the second subsidiary subject of the rondo of the *Sonata Pathétique*.

A performance of this quartet by the Leners was issued in August, 1937. It has been the best version on records to date. The Leners' refinement of style is particularly fitting to this music, and their version is unlikely to be given up by anyone owning it. The Coolidge performance is polished and less personalized than the Lener. The bucolic qualities of the work fare well in the cool objective reading of the Coolidges, but one would have welcomed a little less tonal brilliance and more expressive warmth. The recording is satisfactorily realized.

—P.H.R.

GABRIELI, A.: *Three Ricercari*; played by the Stuyvesant String Quartet. Columbia disc 70366-D, price \$1.00.

▲ This is a work recently released by the Music Press, which also published the Scarlatti *Sonata a Quatro* played by the same quartet on Columbia disc 17214-D. Andrea Gabrieli (c.1510-1586) was a famous singer and an organist at St. Mark's in Venice. He was an important composer in his time, and was also noted as a teacher, numbering among his pupils his distinguished nephew, Giovanni, and the South German pioneer Hassler. Both the Gabriellis evolved their contrapuntal style in such forms as the toccata, the ricercare, the cap-

riccio, etc. The new forms of organ writing, which after Gabrieli became prominent in Germany, are prefigured in his works. It is good to have recorded examples of a man like Gabrieli who all too often is heard of only in history, even though the three pieces here, tautly devised, are by no means of consistent interest. The best of the pieces would seem to be the second.

The Stuyvesant String Quartet perform the music with spirit and expression, and the recording is happily contrived.

—P.H.R.

RAVEL: *Quartet in F major*; played by the Budapest String Quartet. Columbia set M-425, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ The Budapest String Quartet excels in works of the romantic and classical schools. I know of no performances it has recorded of works in those fields which are equalled, much less surpassed, by any other organization. In some instances, the Budapests' playing of the moderns has shown their remarkable insight into the music; their performance of the Bartók *Quartet No. 2* is a case in point. Here it seems to me that they are less in their element than ever before on records. True, they play this work with a rich, glowing tone, with that unexcelled unity of effect and superb finish which are among their salient artistic characteristics. But the Gallic quality of the music is not in this performance; the fastidious élan, the delicacy and above all the elegance of the Ravelian mind are missing. The opening movement, as we hear it here, strangely suggests Brahms. The second movement is far too robustly performed, and the conception of the slow movement, with all the dark, rich tonal qualities of the players, is made to seem more Slavic than French. This sort of playing would be entirely appropriate to Franck, but in my estimation it does not fit Ravel.

However, there may be many who will like this music in this type of performance and admire it for the splendid playing of the four artists. It is quite possible that many who have formerly disliked this quartet will find reasons for liking it in this performance. But the performance of the Pro Arte Quartet will be the choice of those who feel the way we do about Ravel.

This has long been regarded as the best interpretation on records of this quartet, and in our estimation it remains unassailed by this undeniably more richly and vitally recorded version.

—P.H.R.

Keyboard

BACH: *The Little Organ Book (Orgelbüchlein)*, Vol. III — *Chorales 5 - 16*; played by E. Power Biggs on the organ of the Germanic Museum, Cambridge, Mass. Victor set M-697, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ This set brings to a conclusion the ambitious undertaking that Victor and E. Power Biggs have accomplished in recording the entire 45 chorale preludes of the *Orgelbüchlein*. The present album, timed for the Christmas season, contains the chorales that Bach composed for Christmas and New Year's Eve. As pointed out in our previous reviews, the contents of the work, also known as *The Church*

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Year in Music, are arranged chronologically according to each season of the Christian year. Victor has followed the calendar year; the first volume began with the New Year, and this, the last, concludes with New Year's Eve.

It is interesting to note that Bach wrote the music for "beginning organists." True, there are no tremendous technical difficulties to be overcome; yet any organist who approaches this music must have a profound musicianship and an interpretative sense that comes only through complete artistic maturity. As the annotator writes: "Many of the preludes are of a supreme beauty, and the collection has a unity of style, an architecture of contrast and balance that welds the single numbers into an all-embracing whole. The work is at once a summary and a key to Bach's musical language, and to the understanding of the same motives used at length in the Cantatas and the Passions." We might add to this that some of the chorales are as "romantic" as anything composed in the nineteenth century, despite the contrapuntal contours.

The recording ranks with the best that has ever been released on organ discs. A certain amount of excess reverberation is noticeable, as in the previous volumes; otherwise the reproduction is excellent. Biggs plays with more conviction than he has evidenced up to now, and he projects with considerable success the more contemplative excerpts. We still feel that the contrapuntal lines could be brought out more clearly, and there still remains somewhat of a matter-of-fact approach to many of the preludes, but the fact remains that now we have the complete *Orgelbüchlein* to cherish. There are few things in music that stand up so well on repeated hearings; this reviewer has been playing and re-playing the previous volumes with continued profit and enjoyment. The present volume contains music that is equally worthy. Merely play the concluding chorale, *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist* (*The old year has now gone*), and steep yourself in its calm, reflective, autumnal beauty. What greater testimonial could there be for Bach's triumphal affirmation of Christianity?

—H.C.S.

MOZART (arr. Busoni): *Duetto Concertante*; played by Vitya Vronsky and Victor Babin, duo pianists. Victor disc 13500, price \$1.00.

▲ This work was arranged by Busoni in 1919 from the finale of Mozart's *Concerto in F*, K. 459. It is a very good transcription, in the best of taste, and does not weaken the Mozartean flavor by over-elaboration of the piano parts. The performance here matches the transcription. It is clear, crisp, and rhythmically firm though not unyieldingly so. Good teamwork and split-second coordination feature the work of the soloists. As an added feature, the recording is top-notch, with exceptionally quiet surfaces. We recommend this disc.
—H.C.S.

Harp

RESPIGHI (arr. Grandjany): *Siciliana*; and GODEFRIED (arr. Grandjany): *Etude de Concert in E flat minor*, Op. 193; played by Marcel Grandjany (harpist). Victor 10-inch disc 2117, price 75c.

▲ The Respighi piece comes from his *Third Suite of Antique Dances and Arias for Lute*. It was written by an unknown 16th-century composer. Although the work lends itself well to the harp, and Grandjany plays it nicely, I must say I prefer the original Respighi arrangement for strings.

Felix Godefried was a Belgian harpist and composer (1817-1897), who spent most of his life in Paris. The selection here, judging from its Chopinesque qualities, is a product of the romantic movement. It is pretty music, but scarcely original. Although unfamiliar with the original, we suspect that Grandjany's contribution consisted of heightening the technical difficulties.

The recording is quite satisfactory.

P.G.

BACH: *Chorales: Vom Himmel hoch*; and *Lobt Gott ihr Christen allzugleich* (disc 2113); *Dir, Dir, Jebova*; and *Lobe den Herren* (disc 2114); *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*; and *Nun danket alle Gott* (disc 2115); *O Haupt voll*

Blut und Wunden; and *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (disc 2116); sung by The Trapp Family Choir, directed by Dr. Franz Wasner. Victor set M-713, four 10-inch discs, price \$3.50.

▲ The recording of a collection of chorales in the Bach harmonizations is a happy idea, and the Trapp Family has carried it out with the utmost reverence and quiet understanding. Although the set is obviously intended for the Christmas trade its appeal will be by no means confined to this festive season.

The set is particularly timely now as a companion to the *Orgelbüchlein* series which E. Power Biggs has been making for Victor. In reviewing the first volume of these *Chorale Preludes* several months ago, I remember pointing out that in order to understand them it is necessary to know the text of the chorales on which they are based. Here is the opportunity for parallel study, for the idealizations of several of these chorales will be found among the Biggs recordings.

It will probably be as well to warn the prospective buyer that these lovely hymns are best enjoyed one or two at a time, not played through as a set. This is true, at any rate, of the Trapp performances of them. Each of them is well and appropriately sung, but the tonal and dynamic variety of this choir is limited, and there are few contrasts in the collection. A last minute attempt to remedy this by means of *accelerandi* is made in *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, with rather doubtful results. The Trapps have been admired for the healthiness of their style and the cleanness of their performances rather than for any spectacular vocal material. They are, of course, amateurs turned professional, and as such they sing exceedingly well. Their new set meets the standards of those which preceded it as regards both performance and recording.

BELLINI: *Norma: Casta Diva*; and *Ab! bello a me ritorna*; sung by Dusolina Giannini, soprano, with members of La Scala Chorus and Orchestra, Milan, directed by Carlo Sabajno. Victor disc 17503, price \$1.00.

▲ Of the making of *Casta Diva* there is

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no end. Indeed if we are looking for a final and all-satisfying version it is not likely that there will ever be an end. In reviewing the present record I have listened to six others, none without virtues and none as good as I could wish. Sembrich's 1908 recording is not one of her best despite some lovely tones, partly, I think, because of the crowding of a part of the *cavatina* and part of the *cabaletta* on one twelve-inch side, and partly because she and the orchestra did not see eye to eye in matters of time, and partly certainly because hers was not a true *Norma* voice. Lilli Lehmann's 1907 disc is most remarkable for a descending chromatic run comparable only to Tetrizzini's in its electrifying effect. She sings only one verse of the *cavatina*. In some ways the best of all the recordings is the 1910 Boninsegna, in which this soprano is vocally superb, but like Sembrich not quite at one with the orchestra. She takes two sides and sings the scene virtually complete.

Among the electric recordings — indeed among all the recordings — the vocal honors go to Rosa Ponselle, whose voicing of Bellini's music is likely to stand forever as one of the great musical achievements of our time. But she was weakly recorded, and in consequence her disc leaves something to be desired. In Claudia Muzio's Columbia version no attempt is made to capture the hushed atmosphere of the moonlit scene, and her record suffers from the defect opposite to Ponselle's—recording that is too strong. The performance of Ina Souez recently issued in Victor's black-label series and the present Giannini release (both, I believe, recorded several years ago) have the necessary atmosphere. The virtues of the two singers are different and offer a splendid vocal lesson. Both voices are exceptional, but Miss Souez inclines to a fullness of tone which makes for a slight unsteadiness, and Miss Giannini produces the line her rival lacks by means of palate resonance and consequent whiteness of tone. Both have the proper understanding of the music, but neither is above cutting an occasional corner in the florid passages. I wish the directors had not seen fit to end the records with the insipid march. For those who wish to avoid this, it is longer on the Souez

and Ponselle records than on the Giannini. —P.M.

EARLY AMERICAN CAROLS AND FOLK SONGS: *Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head; When Jesus Lived in Galilee* (disc 2119); *Down in the Forest; Jesus the Christ Is Born; See Jesus the Savior* (disc 2120); *The Cherry Tree; Who Killed Cock Robin?* (disc 2121); *The Old Woman and the Pig; The Frog Went Courting; The Carrion Crow* (disc 2122); sung by John Jacob Niles, with piano and dulcimer accompaniments. Victor set M-718, four 10-inch discs, price \$3.50.

▲ Niles is a stylist whose voice, as our reviewer has previously said (in his review of *Early American Ballads*, Nov. 1939 issue), "is a very light and very high whiskey tenor which he extends by the use of a soft and frank falsetto." It must be pointed out, however, that in music like this, which is far removed from the art song, the presentation is more important than the vocalism. Whether or not Niles presents his material in an authentic manner is the chief point here. We have heard from several folk-song authorities that the singer is not especially careful to preserve the true traditions of his field and that he popularizes his songs to a certain extent. Be that as it may, Niles specializes in American folk songs, and the footnotes that he assembles in the present booklet do testify to a certain amount of research.

Most of the American carols and folk songs can be traced back to middle English times. They were brought to this country by the early settlers, and in some regions exist almost in their original forms. *The Cherry Tree* is a good example of a modal melody that has come almost unchanged from pre-Elizabethan times, as are several of the other carols included in the present volume. Equally interesting are the three popular songs that conclude the album, and I imagine that a student of English literature of the Stuart and Carolinian periods will find them fascinating. *The Frog Went Courting* first appeared in Ravenscroft's *Melismata* (1611); there the refrain was the typical Elizabethan *tweedle, tweedle twino*. The refrain that Niles uses

suggests a later addition, possibly of the James II *Lilliburlero* period. I notice that Niles holds the song to be earlier. Here is an interesting little subject of a paper for some English scholar in search of one.

As in the preceding volume, the recording is good. I must compliment Mr. Niles for his excellent diction and for his choice of material. I enjoyed the album; debates about authenticity I shall leave to others.

—H.C.S.

GRIEG: *Haugtussa* (song cycle), *Op. 67*; sung by Kirsten Flagstad, soprano, with piano accompaniment by Edwin McArthur. Victor set M-714, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Mme. Flagstad has been singing this song cycle on her concert programs of late, and her audiences will undoubtedly welcome the opportunity to repeat the experience of its haunting melodies in their own homes. It is a work about which it has been possible in the past to read the highest praise, but with which few of us have had the opportunity to become familiar. Grieg was given the inspiration for the songs in 1895 by the appearance of a small book by Arne Garborg about a girl named Haugtussa. The composer was so fascinated that he contemplated writing a work in one of the larger forms to be based upon it, but since he could never decide upon which form his music should take, he did not get beyond the series of eight songs which became this cycle and a number of incomplete sketches for others. The songs were published two years after they were begun.

Perhaps it is impossible for any but the Norwegians to understand fully the beauties of this work. Whatever the qualities of the poetry, we know that they inspired Grieg to some of his freshest and most attractive melodies. *Det Syng, Blaabaerli*, and above all *Möte* are surely among the loveliest of Scandinavian songs. "What is most fascinating perhaps in the collection," says David Monrad-Johansen in his book on Grieg, "are the brilliant nature pictures. Where in musical literature can one find songs so sparkingly clear and fresh, which mirror so wonderfully nature and pleasant life, which are so filled with sun and summer as *Blaabaerli* and *Killing-*

dans? Once again we must marvel at the way in which Grieg, with very slight deviations from the prevailing keys, obtains the greatest and most surprising effects which give his pictures fragrance and color . . ."

Several months back Mme. Flagstad was quoted as saying that the Wagnerian album she made with Mr. Melchior was the legacy she wished to leave to posterity. Since then the world has changed, and the soprano's rumored retirement has apparently been happily postponed. I wonder now if it is not rather this new set which will tell future generations of the greatness that was Flagstad. There have, after all, been other Wagnerian sopranos, but the lady has few rivals as a singer of Grieg. Never has her voice been so well recorded, and certainly never has she shown so obvious an enthusiasm for any music she has sung to the microphone. They may be a slight falling off in the last song — with its reminiscence of the ending of *Die schöne Müllerin* — but I would attribute this less to Flagstad than to her prosaic accompanist. I am told that her pronunciation of *Maale* (the dialect in which these songs are written) is a source of endless joy to those who understand it. To those of us who do not it is beautiful, and so clear that we could probably take it down by dictation if we but knew all the symbols for the altered vowels.

—P.M.

MADRIGALS, MOTETS, AND CHAN-
SONS; sung by the Lee Jones Madrigal
Singers, directed by Lee Jones. Victor
set G-26, four 10-inch discs, price \$2.50.

▲ The contents are as follows: Weelkes' *We Shepherds Sing*, Pilkington's *Diaphenia*, Wert's *Un Jour je m'en allai*, and Sermisy's *Au joli bois* (disc 26780); Morales' *O Vos Omnes*, Lassus' *Sweet Maiden*, and Weelkes' *To Shorten Winter's Sadness* (disc 26781); Palestrina's *Pater Noster*, Vautour's *Sweet Suffolk Owl*, and Gibbons' *Silver Swan* (disc 26782); Weelkes' *O Care*,

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Thou Wilt Despatch Me, and *Hence Care, Thou Art Too Cruel*, Byrd's *Lullaby*, and Weelkes' *Welcome, Sweet Pleasure*. Five singers compose the Lee Jones Madrigal Singers — Mary Merker and Ann Curtis (sopranos), Evelyn MacGregor (contralto), Charles Harrison (tenor), and Earl Styers (baritone).

This set arrived just as we were going to press, and we could not give it the attention it deserves. It is one of the pleasantest albums that has come our way for some time. The domestic catalogues are very weak in madrigalian literature, and any addition is to be welcomed. True, many of the selections in the present set have been recorded previously; but those recordings either are old or were done in England by the English Singers and are next to impossible to obtain now. Victor has given clear recording to the Lee Jones group, who perform in a spirited and engaging manner, and I hope that the set enjoys enough popularity to warrant another. As representative products of a mighty age of music these compositions, which cover all emotional aspects, can be heard time and again with ever-increasing enjoyment.

—H.C.S.

MARX: *Hat dich die Liebe berührt*; and DVORAK: *Songs My Mother Taught Me*; sung by Florence Easton, with Gerald Moore at the piano. IRCC 10-inch disc, price \$1.75.

▲ Florence Easton made these recordings in London in 1938. It seems strange that one of the major companies did not release them, for the soprano is in splendid voice in both. Joseph Marx has been unjustly neglected on records, for he has written some highly expressive lieder, distinguished for their fine melodic lines, their strongly contrasted part-writing, and their rich harmonic coloring. The present song is a striking example of all of these qualities; the piano part is as expressive as the vocal line, and almost boldly independent of it. It suggests, like many of Strauss' piano parts, that it was conceived with an orchestra in mind; and the song is indeed often sung in an orchestral version. Marx, born in 1882, stems from the later romantic school; he belongs, as one of his countrymen has said, to the transitional period between

Brahms and Wolf on the one hand and the early Schoenberg on the other.

Easton encompasses the difficult tessitura of this song with expressive ease. Her performance is characterized by intelligence and style. I have heard the song sung with more emotional fervor, but never with finer artistic poise. The poem by Paul Heyse reads in part: "If love has entered your heart, amid the tumult of people, walking in golden sunlight, you are safely led by God".

Easton sings the familiar Dvorak song with simple sincerity, perfect diction, and a smooth vocal line. Gerald Moore provides admirable accompaniments; and the recording (electrical) is good.

—P. H. R.

MOUSSORGSKY: *The Nursery* (song cycle); sung by Igor Gorin, baritone, with piano accompaniment by Adolf Baller. Victor set M-686, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.75.

▲ The songs of Moussorgsky are at a tremendous disadvantage in this country where so few of us understand Russian. Of all the Slavic composers he was certainly the one most concerned with the problems of language, and his songs always lean rather to the declamatory style than to the melodic. Unless, therefore, they are sung with deep understanding and sincere conviction in their original tongue, they are not likely to carry over to the American listener. For this reason Mr. Gorin has accepted the compromise of translation, and sings six of the seven songs which make up this cycle in the English version of M.H.C. Collet. Be it said at once that this young Russian has an obvious understanding of our language, and that he sings with the most perfect clarity and scarcely a trace of accent.

Of course the question still remains open as to how close we can really get to Moussorgsky in a performance such as this. The translation is unquestionably a good one as translations go. Generally speaking the songs sound credible enough as Mr. Gorin sings them although there are a few false accents. If the child supposed to be talking to us is not quite like any child we have known, we can explain this by the difference between modern

child psychology in America and that of 19th-century Russia. We might even follow this idea to a conclusive explanation of the causes of the Russian revolution. As for the appeal these records are likely to have, I can say that they are certainly not *for* children: but I think they will be enjoyed by a good many older people. However, they should not be taken as a fair sample of Moussorgsky as a song-writer.

Mr. Gorin is able to lighten his voice sufficiently to give an effect of childhood. Ideally, I suppose, the singer should be a light tenor, or perhaps a mezzo-soprano. The baritone has a wonderful time out of it all, and seems more at home than he did in his more sombre earlier Moussorgsky album. With the one qualification that the piano is rather thinly reproduced, the recording is excellent. —P.M.

PUCCINI: *Madame Butterfly* (complete);
Victor set M-700 (Act 1), six discs,
price \$6.50. Victor set M-701 (Act 2),
ten discs, price \$10.50.

▲ The cast: *Mme. Butterfly*, Toti Dal Monte; *Suzuki*, Vittoria Palombini; *Kate Pinkerton*, Maria Huder; *B. F. Pinkerton*, Beniamino Gigli; *Sharpless*, Mario Basiola; *Goro*, Adelio Zagonara; *Yamadori*, Gino Conti; *Lo Zio Bonzo*, Ernesto Dominici; with the Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Rome, under the direction of Oliviero de Fabritiis.

I suspect that almost every opera-goer's impressions of a work like *Mme. Butterfly* are related to the memory of some particular singer. In reviewing this set in England, Alec Robertson spoke of the unforgettable performance of Destinn. I should speak of the superb and memorable performance that Geraldine Farrar gave in her prime. No other singer has ever equalled it for me. Farrar's impersonation was vibrant and sensitive, infinitely touching in the tragic scenes and warmly human in the happier ones. Farrar was a singing actress who knew how to color her voice to convey the emotions of a joyful or poignant scene. Her recording of the *Death Scene* is compelling and infinitely moving, despite the feeble and wholly inadequate accompaniment.

It seems strange that the Italian record group responsible for this recording should

have chosen to throw the spotlight entirely upon the role of Pinkerton, which in the opera is more negative than positive. Puccini was such a strong feminist that he allowed himself to be carried away with the part of *Butterfly* without giving a thought to the resulting lack of definition of the other characters in the story. Here everything centers upon Gigli, with whose Pinkerton the *Butterfly* of Toti Dal Monte is vocally not on a par. Throughout the recording Gigli sings with fine tonal variety and a greater and more consistent ease than he obtained in his recent recordings of *Bobème* and *Tosca*. Dal Monte has in the past been regarded as a highly gifted coloratura soprano; and in such parts she has exhibited a fine command of tonal artistry. As a Puccini heroine, however, she seems miscast. Her voice here lacks essential warmth and fervor. True, it conveys a certain fragile quality, which suggests the child wife; but this in itself is not enough. That Dal Monte feels the drama is borne out by the way in which she handles the text; her diction is wholly admirable throughout. But she lacks the ability to color her middle voice in such a way as to make the lines meaningful to the listener. Curiously it is the role of Pinkerton that emerges from these records, through Gigli, as a real person. Dal Monte's *Butterfly* is too doll-like to seem real. Such sections as the *Love Duet* in the first act, the aria, *Un bel di*, in the second and the *Death Scene* suffer through the soprano's inability to convey true dramatic fervor.

Basiola is a truly sympathetic Sharpless, and the balance of the cast are all adequate. The orchestral direction of de Fabritiis is expressive, and the balance he attains with the voices throughout is admirable. But when all is said, this is Gigli's show, and this to us seems a reversal of what the composer intended.

It might be well to speak of the two other recordings of *Butterfly*, despite the fact that neither has the orchestral brilliance or the sympathetic orchestral treatment which this one owns. The previous Victor set (M-97) dates from 1931; that of Columbia (CM-4) a year or two earlier. The *Butterfly* of the early Victor set was the Irish soprano Margherita Sheridan, who

was a leading artist at the time of the recording at La Scala in Milan. Sheridan's voice is vibrant and brilliantly dramatic, rather than sensuous. Her portrayal of the unhappy heroine, however, is, owing to her dramatic gifts and the warmth of her middle register, far more convincing than Dal Monte's. The Pinkerton is the English lyric tenor, Lionel Cecil, who was also singing at La Scala in those days. Cecil does not steal the show from Sheridan, for he is not so gifted a vocalist as Gigli, but he proves a more than adequate Pinkerton.

The Columbia set has a famous Italian soprano as the chief protagonist. This is Rosetta Pampanini, who possessed at the time of the recording one of the finest lyric soprano voices in Italy. Her Butterfly, though less dramatic than Sheridan's, is nevertheless expressively sung. The tenor Allesandro Granda is hardly distinguished, but on the whole the Columbia set boasts the best all-around cast. Nevertheless the early Victor set is preferable to the Columbia in many ways, since in the latter some sections of the opera, such as the *Love Duet*, are needlessly hurried. Both of these earlier recordings are entirely satisfactory from the vocal standpoint. —P.H.R.

SCHUMANN: *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Op. 42; sung by Isabel French (soprano) with piano accompaniment by George Reeves. Technichord set T-5, one 12-inch and three 10-inch discs, price \$4.25.

This set will be reviewed by Mr. Miller next month.

SIBELIUS: *Svarta Rosor*, Op. 36, No. 1; *Saf, Saf, Susa*, Op. 36, No. 4; sung by Björling, tenor, with piano accompaniment by Harry Ebert. Victor 10-inch disc 4531, price 75c.

▲ With all the attention that has been drawn to Sibelius in recent years, it seems we are a little late in investigating his songs. Only a handful of them have reached recording as yet, no doubt because so few of our singers have caught up with the necessity of incorporating a few Scandinavian languages in their repertoires. *Svarta Rosor* (*Black Roses*) was, I believe, the first Sibelius song I ever heard, and since I heard it rather frequently a number of years ago I suppose it must have

been the best known of his lieder in this country before he was so universally "discovered" by the orchestral conductors. Glancing now over the German translation of the text, I am struck first by the utter hopelessness of trying to make sane English out of it, and also by the thought that it probably does not even approach the quality of the original. So without more explanation than the idea that "the roses have been turned black by grief," I commend the song as a strong and effective one. It is admirably suited to the virility of Björling's singing, and his glorious voice rings out in it with fine effect. There is almost Italianate emotionalism in his treatment of the final line, but this does not degenerate into bathos.

Saf, Saf, Susa is well known in Marian Anderson's excellent recording, one of the first she made after her triumphant return from Europe. It is the lament of a lover who tells the lake and the reeds of how his love was taken from him. Miss Anderson's voice had more of haunting tenderness in it than Mr. Björling's, which makes for a more effective beginning and end, but in the dramatic middle section the tenor easily outdoes the contralto. The recording balance is quite naturally better on the new disc, but I would hesitate to recommend either version to the exclusion of the other. There is room in my own collection for both. —P.M.

WASNER: *Away in a Manger*; and *Kindersegen*; sung by The Trapp Family Choir, directed by Dr. Franz Wasner. Victor 10-inch disc 2118, price 75c.

▲ The Trapps and their musical director, Dr. Wasner, offer a little special for Christmastide. These are two very simple settings of hymns familiar in the singers' adopted and native lands respectively. *Away in a Manger* is said to be a translation from Martin Luther, and has long been associated with Spillman's tune for *Flow Gently, Sweet Afton*. Dr. Wasner has given the words a new and more appropriate melody. *Kindersegen*, which begins *Ach, lieber Herre Jesu Christ* will be recognized as a new setting of a text which figures among the Brahms *Deutsche Volkslieder*, in which arrangement it has been recorded by Lehmann Engel's Madrigal

Singers for Columbia. There is nothing striking or startling in the music sung by the Trapps, or in the manner of its presentation. Nor should there be. The recording is excellent.

—P.M.

THE VOICE OF POETRY, Vol. II: *An anthology of recorded verse*; recited by John Gielgud. Columbia set M-419, six 10-inch discs, price \$5.00.

▲ In December, 1939, the first volume of *The Voice of Poetry* was issued by Columbia. In it Edith Evans recited representative selections of English poetry. The present set is similar in scope, containing selections from Shakespeare to T. S. Eliot. Scholarly notes are contributed by Wallace B. Nichols. Since there are some factual omissions, however, and since we feel that the reader who is interested in the album will want more information on the poetry, we append some remarks that will complement the notes.

Edmund Waller's *Go, Lovely Rose*, is familiar to every student of post-Elizabethan verse, and can be found in any anthology. It is not generally known that Sir Henry Lawes set the poem to music in his *Airs and Dialogues* (1655). The following anonymous poem, *Since First I Saw Your Face*, is rather rare and, so far as I know, can be found in no anthology except Fellowes' *English Madrigal Verse* or Bullen's *Lyrics from the Song Books*. It is Song 8 in Ford's *Musicke Of Sundrie Kindes* (1607), and is an outstanding specimen of the Elizabethan lyric at its best. Two Shakespeare sonnets are included — Nos. 18 and 73. The latter is one of a group (71-74) anticipating the poet's death. Gielgud nearly ruins the sense of part of the poem by pausing at the end of the third line, seemingly not realizing that it is a run-on line. As he reads it, the following line does not make sense. Ben Jonson's *The Triumph* is also included; in *Underwoods* (1641) it is entitled *Her Triumph*. Incidentally, the last two verses appeared as a song in the anonymous Stuart play *The Devil Is an Ass*. Another Elizabethan, the mighty John Donne, is represented by his tenth *Holy Sonnet* (published 1633 but probably written about 1615) — one of the greatest sonnets in our language.

From the Elizabethans Gielgud jumps to the Romantics, reciting poems by Shelley (*Ode to the West Wind* and *Ozymandias*) and Byron (*So We'll Go No More A-Roving*). These, and the following poems by Kingsley (*Young and Old*), Christina Rossetti (*A Birthday*), Morris (*Summer Dawn*), Tennyson (*Break, Break, Break*), Bridges (*The Storm Is Over*), Sassoon (*Lone Heart, Learning and Down the Glimmering Staircase*), Walter de la Mare (*Arabia and Silver*), Masfield (*Truth*) and Davies (*Leisure*) are too well known, in most cases, to require comment. The last disc is devoted to T. S. Eliot — *The Journey of the Magi* and *Preludes*. Eliot is a real classicist, and some of his *Preludes* are intensely Swiftian; compare them with the latter's *City Shower*.

Gielgud is at his best in the Eliot poems, and while he may not always be in sympathy with all of the poems he recites, his voice is at all times well modulated, clearly articulated, and resonant. Mr. Miller, in his review of the first volume, made a good point when he suggested that it would have been better to have a variety of voices. When playing the album straight through one becomes conscious of a too-dramatic quality, and there is a feeling that Gielgud is just a trifle too "stagy" — that he is an actor addressing his public rather than an interpreter of the poems. As a result a certain monotony is apparent; nor does the often sepulchral quality of the voice help matters. But the joy of hearing some of the poems recited is ample compensation for what is, after all, one person's reservations.

—H. C. S.

WAGNER: *The Story of "The Rhinegold"; The Story of "The Valkyrie"; The Story of "Siegfried"; The Story of "The Twilight of the Gods"*; told at the piano by Robert Lawrence. Victor sets G-22—G-25, three discs in each album, complete set \$10.00.

▲ This set is for those who wish to familiarize themselves with the plot and themes of *The Ring of the Nibelungs*. Robert Lawrence tells the story in a lucid manner, illustrating with the leading motives as he goes along. We believe that the four albums will prove quite helpful

as an introduction to the music-dramas. Fortunately, Lawrence does not play down to his audience; his approach is sensible and straightforward, with none of the my-dear-children attitude that some commentators adopt.

Black Label Sets

CAROLS OF THE ENGLISH YULE-TIDE: *Good King Wenceslas*; and *The Boar's Head Carol* (disc 26727); 1. *Friendly Beasts*; 2. *The Holly and the Ivy*; and 1. *When Christ Was Born of Mary Free*; 2. *Wassail* (disc 26728); 1. *Old Yorkshire Gooding Carol*; 2. *Gather Around the Christmas Tree*; 3. *God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen*; and 1. *While We Come A-Wassailing*; 2. *Deck the Hall*; 3. *I Saw Three Ships Sailing In*. Victor Chapel Choir, directed by Emile Coté. Victor set P-42, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.00.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS; played by Alexander D. Richardson at the organ. Victor set P-43, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.00.

KETELBEY: *Concert Music: In Holiday Mood — Suite* (3 sides); *Sunbeams and Butterfly*; *Sanctuary of the Heart*; and *The Sacred Hour*; The London Palladium Orch. Victor set G-27, price \$2.50.

FABINI: *Music from South America: Isle of the Ceibos* (disc 36354); and *The Country* (discs 36355/56); played by Victor Symphony Orch., conducted by V. Shavitch. Victor set G-21, three discs, price \$2.50.

▲ The Fabini set dates from 1928. It would have been fitting had Victor arranged to re-record this music at this time. The composer is a Uruguayan who studied in France. His music is national in color and expression. *Isle of the Ceibos* is a spot in the desert where the "birds gather every afternoon and interrupt the desert stillness with their chorus of many voices." *The Country (El Campo)* makes use of the native songs of the Gauchos. Both symphonic poems are picturesque and colorful.

Other Recordings

LAYTON: *Dear Old Southland*; and **CARPENTER:** *Notbin'*; Paul Robeson, basso, with orch. Victor 10-inch disc

26741, price 50c.

HERBERT: *A Kiss in the Dark*; and *Indian Summer*; Webster Booth, tenor, with orch. Victor 10-inch disc, 26745, price 50c.

BURLEIGH: *Little Child of Mary*; and **BAIN:** *O Gathering Clouds*; John McCormack, tenor, with piano. Victor 10-inch disc 26772, price 50c.

PUCCINI: *La Bobeme — Duet finale, Act 1*; and **VERDI:** *Il Trovatore — Miserere* (sung in English) Joan Cross, soprano, Webster Booth, tenor, with Sadler's Wells Orch. and Chorus. Victor disc 36374, price 75c.

WAINWRIGHT: *Christians, Awake!* and *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks at Night*; Royal Choral Society (London) with organ. Victor 10-inch disc 26773, price 50c.

GRUBER: *Silent Night, Holy Night*; and 1. **WILSON:** *The Wayside Chapel*; 2. **WILSON:** *Moonlight on the Hudson*; 3. **LEFEBURE-WELY:** *Monastery Bells*; recorded from an old Swiss Music Box. Victor 10-inch disc 26789, price 50c.

YRADIER: *La Paloma*; and **BAYNES:** *Destiny — Waltz*; London Palladium Orch. Victor 10-inch disc 26754, price 50c.

BOCCHERINI (arr. Goehr): *Minuet*; and **SIMONETTI:** *Madrigale*; New Mayfair String Orch. Victor 10-inch disc 26771, price 50c.

QUILTER: *Children's Overture*; London Phil. Orch. direction of Barbirolli. Victor disc 36370, price 75c.

LEHAR: *Viennese Gayeties:* Selections from *The Merry Widow* and *Yours Is My Heart Alone* (disc 26774); Selections from *Gypsy Love* and *Frasquita* (disc 26775); Selections from *Count of Luxembourg* and *Eva* (disc 26776). Margaret Daum, soprano; Felix Knight, tenor; and Chorus, with Victor Salon Orch., direction Nathaniel Shilkret. Victor set P-44, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.00.

HITS from THE ZIEGFELD FOLLIES: *A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody*; and 1. *Have a Heart*; 2. *Underneath the Japanese Moon* (disc 26777); *Rose of Washington Square*; and *Hello 'Frisco!* (disc 26778); 1. *Shine On, Harvest*

Moon; 2. *On the Grand Old Sand*; and *Woodman Spare that Tree* (disc 26779). Victor Salon Co., directed by Nathaniel Shilkret. Victor set P-45, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.00.

New Add-A-Part Records

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Nutcracker Suite*. Piano part missing. Columbia set S-50, two discs, price \$3.50.

SCHUMANN: *Traumerei*; and SCHUBERT: *Serenade*. Accompaniment for cello or bassoon—Columbia disc 65192, price \$1.50. Accompaniment for horn in F—Columbia disc 65193, price \$1.50. Accompaniment for viola—Columbia disc 65194, price \$1.50.

BLAND: *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny*; and *Long, Long Ago* (arr. Mittler). Accompaniment for voice. Columbia 10-inch disc 45105, price \$1.00.

New Children's Sets

ROBIN HOOD (script by Saul Lancourt; music by Margaret Carlisle); presented by the Junior Programs Opera Co., with Barry Mahool as narrator, five vocalists, and instrumental accompaniment by Hammond organ, clarinet and cello. Victor set P-35, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.00.

HANSEL AND GRETEL (adaptation by Saul Lancourt; music by Humperdinck); presented by the Junior Programs Opera Co., with Barry Mahool, narrator, Marian Selee, as Hansel, Cecile Sherman, as Gretel, and four other singers, with the Victor Orchestra, directed by Nathaniel Shilkret. Victor set P-38, four 10-inch discs, price \$2.50.

TAP DANCE PRACTICE; by James R. Whitton, Member of the Dancing Masters of America, Inc. Bluebird Record Set BC-25, price \$1.00.

THE FIVE HUNDRED HATS OF BARTHOLOMEW CUBBINS; as told by Paul Wing, with music and sound effects. Bluebird Record Set BC-26, price \$1.00.

LULLABIES OF MANY LANDS; sung by Leila Mae Flynn (soprano), with Helen E. Myers at the piano. Bluebird Record Set BC-27, price \$1.00.

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RUMPLESTILSKIN; THE GOBLIN AND THE SHOEMAKER; THE LITTLE RED HEN; and **THE GINGERBREAD MAN;** told by Helen E. Myers with songs and sound effects. Bluebird Record Set BC-34, price \$1.00.

Hot Jazz

Honky Tonk Train Blues (Lewis); and *Tell Your Story Blues*. Blue Note No. 15, price \$1.50.

Six Wheel Chaser; and *Bass On Top*. Blue Note No. 16, price \$1.50. All four sides—piano solos by Meade "Lux" Lewis.

This makes the third *Honky Tonk Train Blues* Lewis has recorded: the first and original, was Paramount 12896; the second, English Parlophone R2187; and now the third in a revised, 12-inch version.

Meade "Lux" Lewis did not originate the boogie woogie style of piano playing. But whether he did or not is only of historical importance. What really matters is that Lewis has raised that style of playing to a level of perfection equalled by no other exponent of that art. There is a certain smoothness, vigor, intensity of feeling about his work which makes it sound like a genuine form of jazz expression, not a freak manner of playing the piano. Regardless of its merit as jazz (and it can sound pretty empty and annoying in the hands of anyone less than an expert) there

is no denying that boogie woogie played by Lewis is a joy to the ear.

Honky Tonk Train Blues is certainly the most famous of all boogie woogie pieces, *Yancey's Special* notwithstanding. It is a remarkable musical picture of a train in motion and in passing it may be noted that the only other pieces of music about a train that gained any kind of international renown are Honegger's *Pacific 231* and Ellington's *Daybreak Express*: one definitely jazz and the other with certain jazz characteristics. Lewis' new version gains immeasurably by up-to-date recording and its extension to twelve-inch size. A comparison with the earlier Parlophone recording reveals very little change in style or interpretation but a faster pace which suits the music excellently. It is hardly apparent just where Lewis extended the work.

Six Wheel Chaser is quite plainly a continuation of the same impression. The theme is different but the style, pace, form, and mood are the same. This should prove a worthy successor, or rather supplement to *Honky Tonk Train*. The playing and recording are impeccable.

Tell Your Story and *Bass on Top* are no less interesting musically, particularly *Bass on Top*, in which the bass part is given unusual prominence. The "walking bass" effect so characteristic of all boogie woogie playing is here strikingly emphasized.

One has a well satisfied feeling after hearing all four sides and an overwhelming admiration for Meade "Lux" Lewis' art. Also a feeling of gratitude to Blue Note for having preserved this fine work so effectively.

—E.A.

In the Popular Vein

Horace Van Norman

AAAA—*Warm Valley*, and *The Flaming Sword*. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Victor 26796.

● These are two extraordinarily effective works, one more disc in the long line of superlatively fine recordings Ellington has been turning out since his shift to Victor. *The Flaming Sword* is an amazing affair that is cast in a rhythm bearing a superficial resemblance to the conga (like *Conga Brata*). Like

that fine work, this is the conga transformed and exalted into something terrifying and overwhelming. The miracle of Ellington is that a man of his teeming originality should have been blessed with a band that obeys his artistic dictates with such complete understanding. Whatever his commercial success may be, now or in the future, he will remain one of the most fortunate artists that ever lived because of the wholly satisfying outlet his band provides for every idea he has, no matter how daring or experimental. One of the happiest features of this disc is the uncommonly apt and imaginative titles. Too often titles of jazz pieces are merely lunatic. These show a poetic grasp of the musical content of each number to an unusual degree.

AAAA—*The Last Time I Saw Paris*, and *Why Do I Love You?* Hildegarde. Decca 23183.

● *The Last Time I Saw Paris* is a really moving song from the illustrious pens of Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern. It is a number of rare charm and hidden pathos, which Hildegarde realizes with a quite astonishing degree of effectiveness. What this rather fragile little ditty will turn out to be at the hands of the dance band vocalists one shudders to contemplate, but it apparently is just suited for Hildegarde. The reverse, *Why Do I Love You?*, another not altogether obscure number from the same authors, is a nice thought.

AAA—*The Moon Fell in the River*, and *Somewhere*. Will Bradley and his Orchestra. Columbia 35764.

● Will Bradley's somewhat meteoric rise to popularity on his boogie-woogie cycle should not blind us to the fact that he is capable of doing a job on a sweet number with the best of them, as this excellent record proves. Peter de Rose's *The Moon Fell in the River* is a song hit of *It Happened On Ice* and is a melody quite typical of the lush idiom of the composer. Like Tommy Dorsey, Bradley plays the trombone very beautifully, so it is not to be wondered that trombone solos form a conspicuous part of Bradley's sweet arrangements. One hopes that he will not allow that characteristic to become quite so much of a mannerism as did Dorsey in his smooth arrangements for so long.

AAA—*Make It Another Old Fashioned Please*, and *My Mother Would Love You*. Leo Reisman and his Orchestra. Victor 27200.

● From all appearances, *Panama Hattie* is to be one of the smash musical show hits of the season, but we fear Cole Porter's score can be credited with little of its success, for on the evidence at hand his contributions are fairly feeble. *Make It Another Old Fashioned Please* is the better of these two, being a rather attractive melody in the beguine rhythm which Porter is so fond of. Unfortunately, a large part of the present recording is devoted to a thoroughly unpleasant vocal by one Sara Horn. As for *My Mother Would Love You*, we simply refuse to believe that Porter could have written so undistinguished a melody. Say it ain't so, Cole.

AAA—*Let's Be Buddies*, and *Dream Valley*. Eddy Duchin and his Orchestra. Columbia 35780.

● *Let's Be Buddies* is also from *Panama Hattie* and is almost as corny a tune as the aforementioned *My Mother Would Love You*. However, we can conceive that as presented in the show by Miss Merman and little Miss Carroll it might possess considerable charm. But Duchin's treatment of it is as inappropriate as it could possibly be. Instead of making it jaunty and whimsical with just a touch of pathos, he gives it the high powered emotionalism that characterizes everything he touches and the results are just too bad. Incidentally, if you want to get a line on the quality of Duchin's musicianship, give a listen to his piano solos, recently released by Columbia in an album.

AAA—*Country Gal*, and *Jubilee Stomp*. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Columbia 35776.

● *Country Gal* is another superb Ellington, apparently recorded shortly before his defection to Victor. It is a melancholy masterpiece of the type that he used to turn out so frequently about six years ago, and aside from the intrinsic merit of the work itself, serves to demonstrate anew the uncontested supremacy of Johnny Hodges as an alto saxophonist. *Jubilee Stomp*, on the reverse, is a reprint of a disc that must date from about 1927, when Ellington was using the pseudonym The Jungle Band for his Brunswick recordings, but the fact that it is a reprint is inexcusably omitted from the label, which may give rise to considerable consternation among the uninitiated. After all, a

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lot has happened to music and to Ellington in twelve years, and the fact that this is an item of purely historical interest should be made plainer than a mere listing of the band's personnel on the label.

AAA—*Adios*, and *Green Eyes*. Xavier Cugat and Waldorf-Astoria Orchestra. Victor 26794.

● Two favorite rumbas of long-sustained popularity, Cugat does them with the finesse and tonal loveliness that always characterize his recordings. *Adios*, written by Enric Madriguera and used by him for years as his theme song, is certainly one of the most charming of all rumbas, and the fact that Madriguera has himself recently re-recorded it after many years makes it rather difficult to choose between the two recordings. All things considered, however, we feel that Cugat should be awarded the palm for the superior quality of the recording.

AAA—*I'd Know You Anywhere*, and *You've Got Me This Way*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 26770.

● The newly-formed song-writing combination of Johnny Mercer and Jimmy McHugh is responsible for this pair of tunes. Both are from the current Kay Kyser film, *You'll Find Out*, and as is to be expected from the union of two such redoubtable figures in the song-writing world, they are thoroughly slick, competent examples of song carpentering. However, that's about all that can be said for them. It is quite appropriate that the slick, competent Tommy Dorsey should have been chosen to record them, and the results are satisfying.

OTHER POPULAR RECORDINGS OF MERIT

AAA—*The Workers' Train*, and *Feelin' Tip Top*. Cab Calloway and his Orchestra. Okeh 5874.
AAA—*Creepy Weepy*, and *Improvisation in Several Keys*. Walter Gross (piano solo). Bluebird B-10937.

AAA—*Drummer Boy*, and *Ain't Goin' Nowhere*. Bob Crosby and his Orchestra. Decca 3451.

AAA—*Louisville, K-Y*, and *Tea Dance*. Ella Fitzgerald and her Famous Orchestra. Decca 3441.

AAA—*I Hear a Rhapsody*, and *The Moon Is Cryin' for Me*. Charlie Barnet and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10934.

AAA—*Blues*, and *The Apple Jump*. Count Basie and his Orchestra. Okeh 5862.

AAA—*Make Believe Ballroom Time*, and *Old Black Joe*. Glenn Miller and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10913.

AAA—*Coquette*, and *I Still Have My Dreams*. Horace Henderson and his Orchestra. Okeh 5841.

AA—*Please*, and *You Are the One*. Bing Crosby with John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra. Decca 3450.

AA—*Norfolk Ferry*, and *Put Yourself in My Place*. Erskine Hawkins and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10932.

AA—*Arab Dance*, and *Dance of the Reed-Flutes*. Larry Clinton and his Bluebird Orchestra. Bluebird B-10927.

AA—*Falling Leaves*, and *A Handful of Stars*. Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Decca 3446.

AA—*Five O'Clock Whistle*, and *The Golden Wedding*. Woody Herman and his Orchestra. Decca 3436.

AA— *Gee But I Hate To Go Home Alone*, and *Sing (It's Good for You)*. Teddy Grace with Bud Freeman and the Summa Cum Laude Orchestra. Decca 3436.

AA—*I'm Gonna Salt Away Some Sugar*, and *Blue Eyes*. "Fats" Waller and his Rhythm. Bluebird B-10943.

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